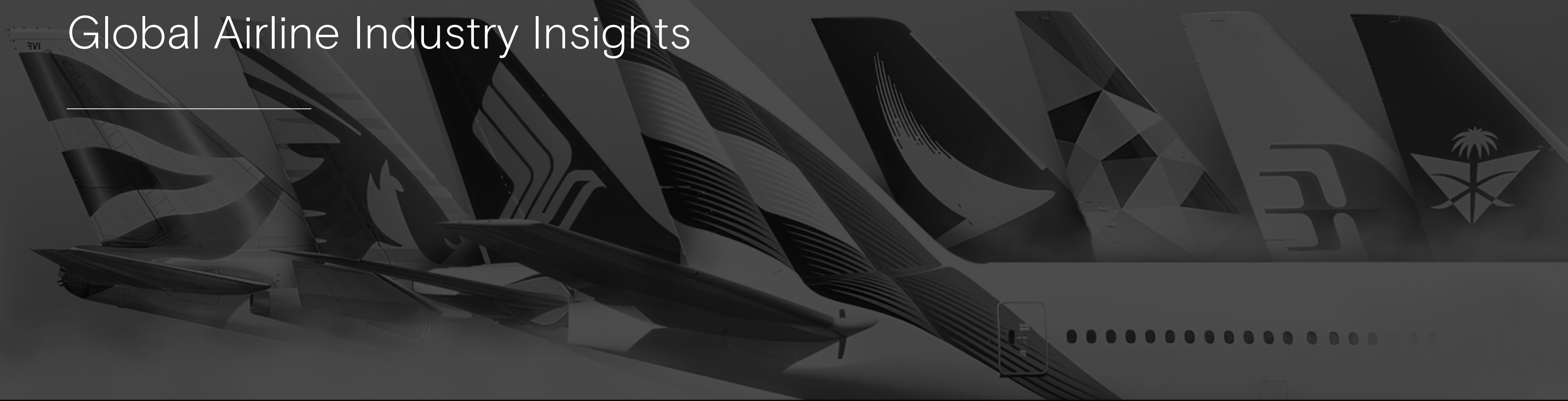




INTRODUCING

Reputation by CARMA:

Global Airline Industry Insights



What is Reputation?

Reputation is a valuable intangible asset for organizations.

As the guardians of reputation how do you tie together everything you do through the audience journey and get to the bottom of what is changing their minds about your brand?

The difficulty lies in siloed, often incomplete data and lack of a robust approach.

Approach

Our holistic, robust methodology has been designed specifically for PR and comms professionals, to track the impact of earned and organic media on reputation.

We look for the same 6 pillars across 3 data sets – traditional media coverage, social media conversation, and audience opinion research.

This allows us to track the audience journey – what media they're exposed to, what social media discussions they may see or participate in, and finally what they actually think and feel.

This report looks at coverage and social media from January 1 – May 31, 2024, with audience research conducted in July 2024.

The data sets included are:

Traditional Media

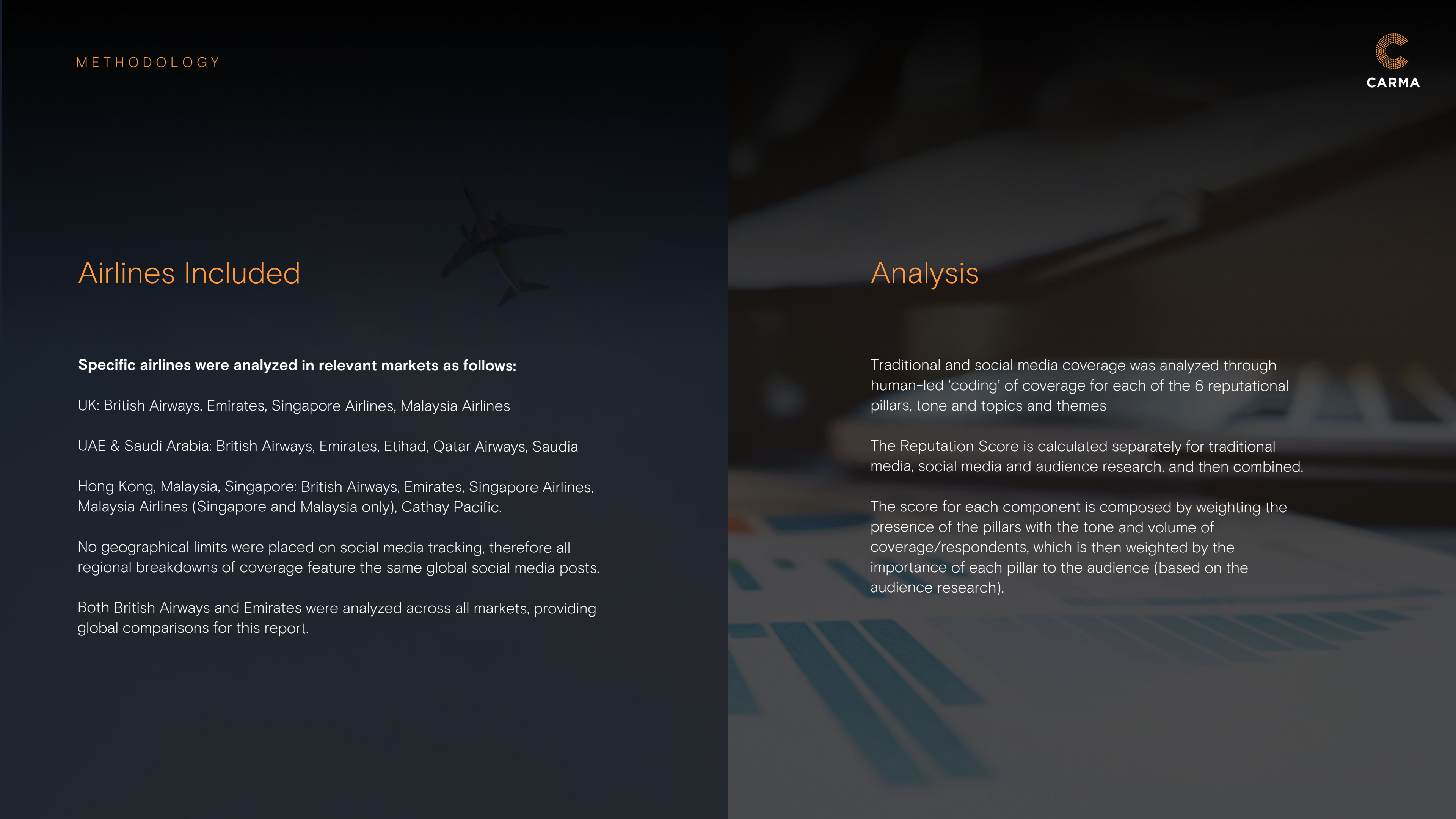
Online editorial content from Tier 1 media sources in the UK, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. This includes some pan-regional and international titles which cross borders. A sample of 1,151 articles (542 in the selected Asian markets, 425 in the selected Middle Eastern markets and 184 in the UK), which featured prominent mentions of the tracked airlines were included.

Social Media

Global content from X/Twitter which mentioned the tracked airlines. A sample of 1,742 posts, filtered based on engagements and followers in line with average regional engagement trends, to ensure capture of content most likely to have been seen (content with 100 or more followers and 200 or more engagements in Europe, North America and MENA; content with 100 or more engagements in Asia). No owned posts from the tracked airlines were included.

Audience Research

A nationally representative quantitative research study was conducted through online surveys targeting 1,534 respondents spread over the UK, UAE, KSA, Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. The study measured people's knowledge of organizations, their perceptions of organizations based on what they know about them as well as level of media exposure to those organizations.



Airlines Included

Specific airlines were analyzed in relevant markets as follows:

UK: British Airways, Emirates, Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines

UAE & Saudi Arabia: British Airways, Emirates, Etihad, Qatar Airways, Saudia

Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore: British Airways, Emirates, Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines (Singapore and Malaysia only), Cathay Pacific.

No geographical limits were placed on social media tracking, therefore all regional breakdowns of coverage feature the same global social media posts.

Both British Airways and Emirates were analyzed across all markets, providing global comparisons for this report.

Analysis

Traditional and social media coverage was analyzed through human-led ‘coding’ of coverage for each of the 6 reputational pillars, tone and topics and themes

The Reputation Score is calculated separately for traditional media, social media and audience research, and then combined.

The score for each component is composed by weighting the presence of the pillars with the tone and volume of coverage/respondents, which is then weighted by the importance of each pillar to the audience (based on the audience research).

Our Pillars



PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Anything related to their customer offering, such as quality, reliability and customer service.



CULTURE

Anything related to their organizational culture, such as employee treatment, health & safety, diversity & inclusion.



SUSTAINABILITY

Anything related to their sustainability actions, such as community engagement, environmental impact, and charitable endeavors.



CONDUCT

Anything related to their behavior and conduct, such as authenticity, transparency, compliance and ethical behavior.



PERFORMANCE

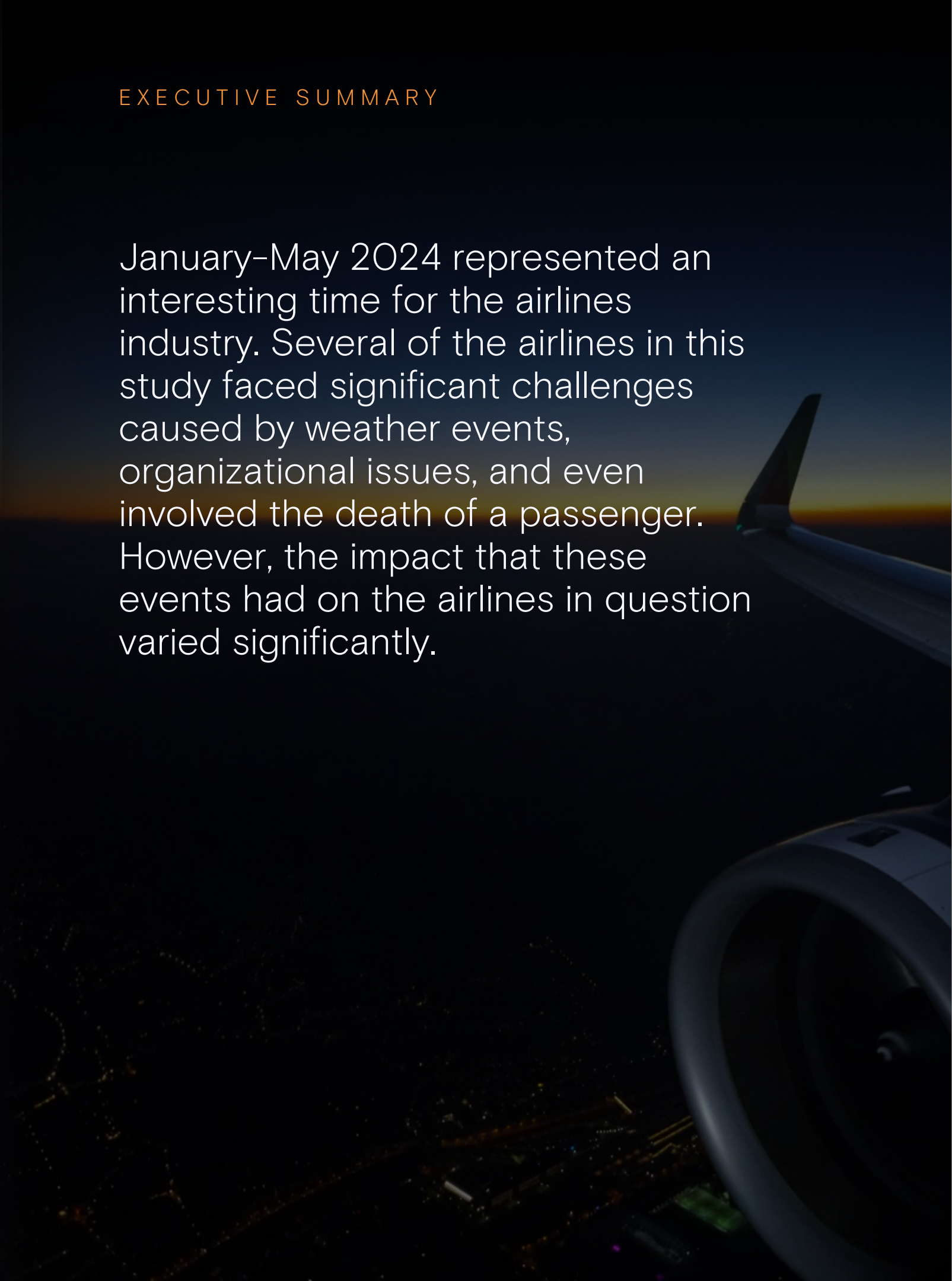
Anything related to their business performance, such as consistency, investment potential and financial results



VISION

Anything related to their direction and vision of the future, such as innovation, value proposition and expertise

Executive Summary



January–May 2024 represented an interesting time for the airlines industry. Several of the airlines in this study faced significant challenges caused by weather events, organizational issues, and even involved the death of a passenger. However, the impact that these events had on the airlines in question varied significantly.

Media and public aligned on what matters – Products & Services.

- Across the whole study, Products & Services was the biggest driver of traditional and social media (70% and 65% of volumes, respectively), and the most influential factor on people’s opinions of a company’s reputation.
- Looking at how that played out, British Airways received notable criticism in the British press and from some users on social media. However, this did not have quite the impact on audience opinion that one might expect, suggesting that while British media may be more cynical, audiences take this with a pinch of salt.

Proactive communications can challenge associations

- Malaysia Airlines is still struggling with the loss of flight 370, still front of mind for many. But a distinct lack of proactive comms on both traditional and social media is not counteracting this, or balancing their reputation globally or locally.

Not all crises are equal

- Incidents like turbulence on board a Singapore Airlines flight and the disruption caused by the Dubai floods demonstrate that it is possible to have positive and neutral outcomes from such crises. Reputation wasn’t overly impacted for Singapore Airlines, Emirates, etc., because the airlines weren’t blamed, and their responses were even praised at times. This was reflected in positive audience opinion scores.
- Cathay Pacific did not see the same generosity of spirit with its cancellations and disruptions due to staff shortages precisely because it was seen as the result of poor planning and underinvesting in staff. The resulting impact on reputation was clear to see, with its overall reputation score one of the lowest in the whole study.

Conduct and Culture not to be underestimated

- In more corporate arenas, Singapore Airlines saw notable success with news that it would give a very generous bonus to staff as a result of strong financial results. Positive coverage and social media praise abounded, and while audience research results were favorable, it may require more consistent comms from the company on how they treat their staff to fully realize the potential boost to reputation.

GLOBAL TRENDS



Global Trends

Top themes within media discussion



Top themes in traditional media

Number of Articles

Route disruptions	671
Customer experience / service	325
Employee-related	189
Safety issues & incidents	185
Growth / Expansion	108
Strategy & innovation	102
Financial results / business performance	88
Management / leadership	72
Environmental issues	51
Awards & rankings	41



Top themes in social media

Number of Posts

Customer experience / service	474
Awards & Rankings	253
Growth / Expansion	184
Sports sponsorship	119
Aircraft	105
Financial results / business performance	76
Employee-related	68
Safety issues & incidents	66
Branding	59
Recruitment / Vacancies	44

Customer services and experiences, including delays and cancellations, were by far the most prevalent topics across both media types – matching global priorities, as audience research shows that **Products & Services** is the most influential reputational pillar. Passengers sharing their experiences – positive and negative – was the biggest driver of this topic on social media.

Route disruptions content was primarily generated by the Dubai floods, and by Cathay Pacific’s staff shortages which resulted in the cancellation of dozens of flights.

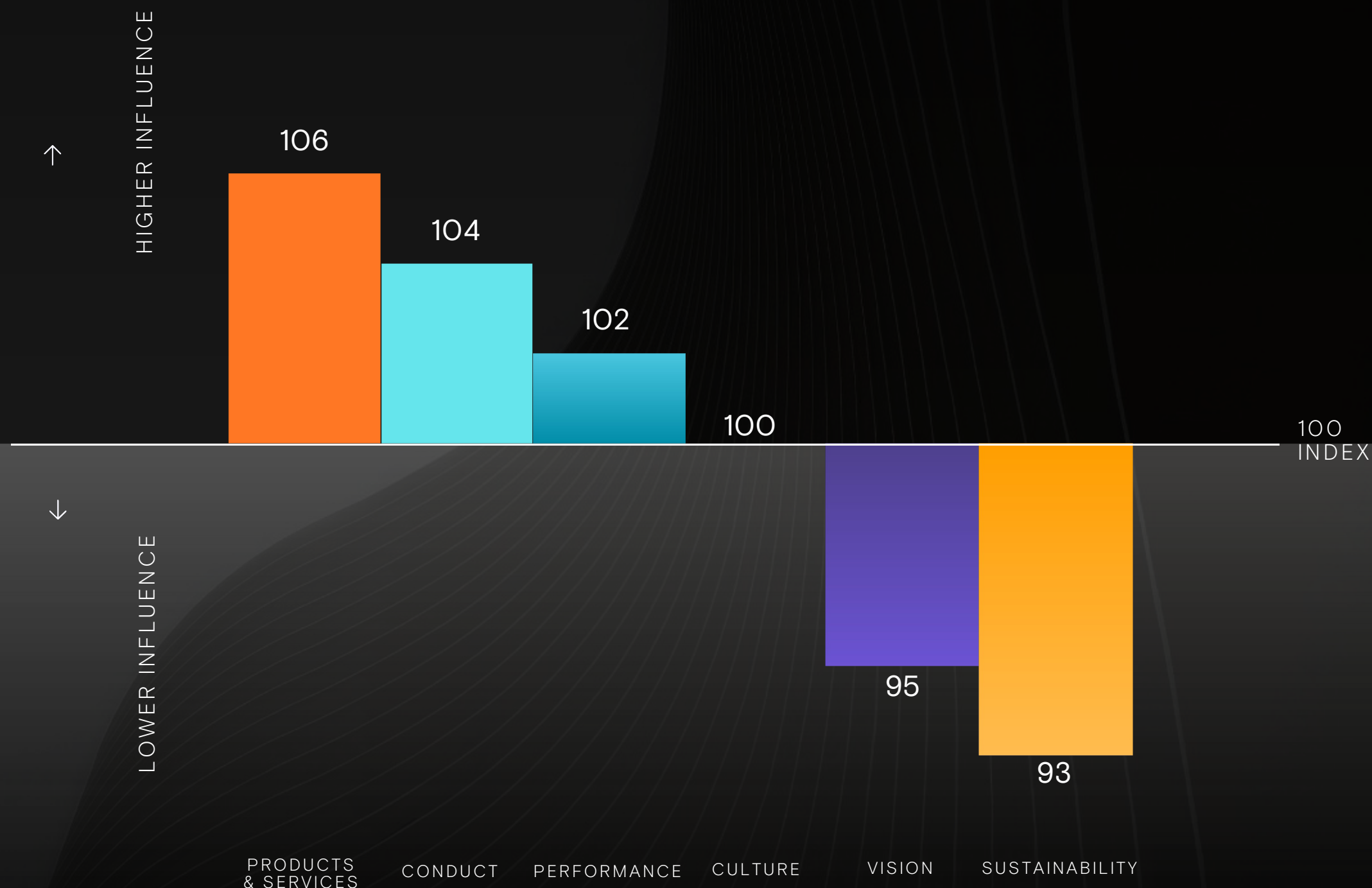
Awards and top airlines rankings were particularly prevalent in social media, as trade handles shared them repeatedly, boosting positive tone on the platform.

Financial results were the biggest driver of positive traditional media coverage, due to strong quarterly and year-end results for several airlines which reflected the industry’s post-Covid recovery.

Sponsorship was a key driver of neutral coverage on social media, thanks to airlines being tagged in posts about their sponsorship of sports initiatives and teams. Whilst a strong driver of visibility, its neutral tone makes it less likely to have had direct impact on how positively or otherwise people feel about the airlines in question. The airlines most mentioned in sponsorship-related posts were British Airways and Qatar Airways.

What actually matters

Products & Services most influential; Sustainability has the least influence on people's perception of an organization's reputation



Not all pillars of reputation are equal to the general public.

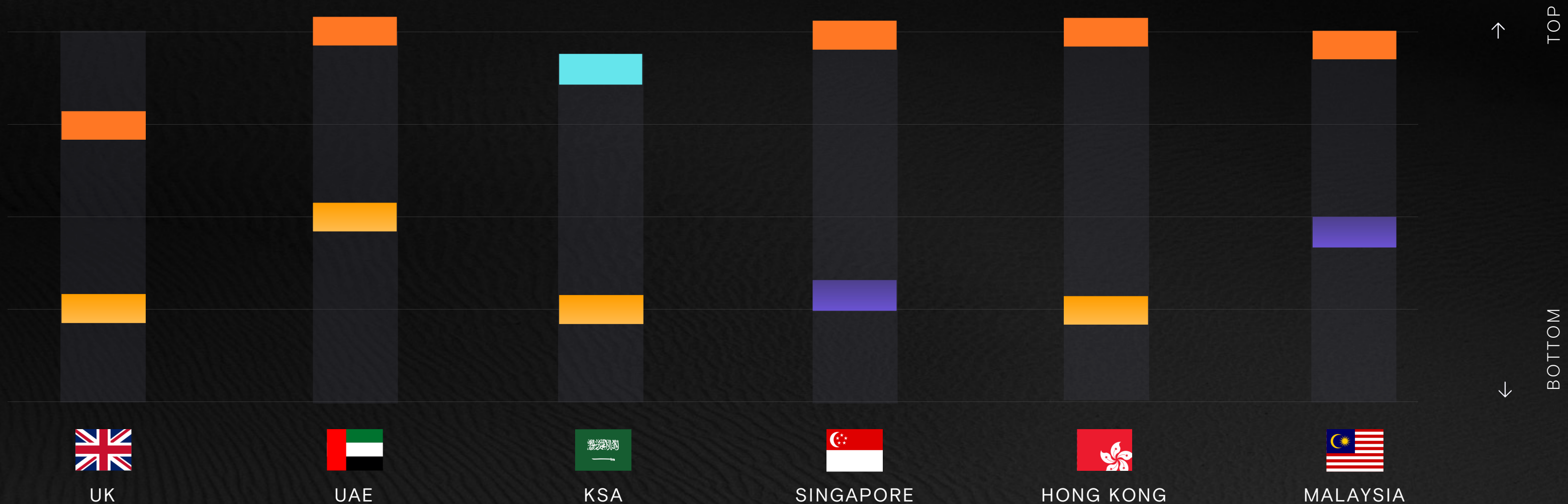
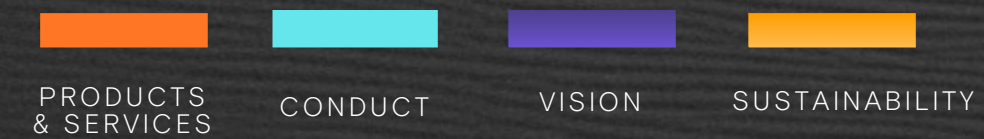
Our audience research demonstrates this – when asked which pillars were the most influential on how they viewed an organization, respondents rated Products & Services the highest, followed by Conduct.

At the lowest end of the scale was Sustainability.

This may be down to several factors – as cost-of-living crises have hit around the world in the aftermath of Covid, many consumers have had to put value for money over environmental and ethical concerns. Or, it may be that passengers are resigned to the fact that air travel is inherently unfriendly to the environment, and therefore it factors less into their opinions and decision making when it comes to airlines.

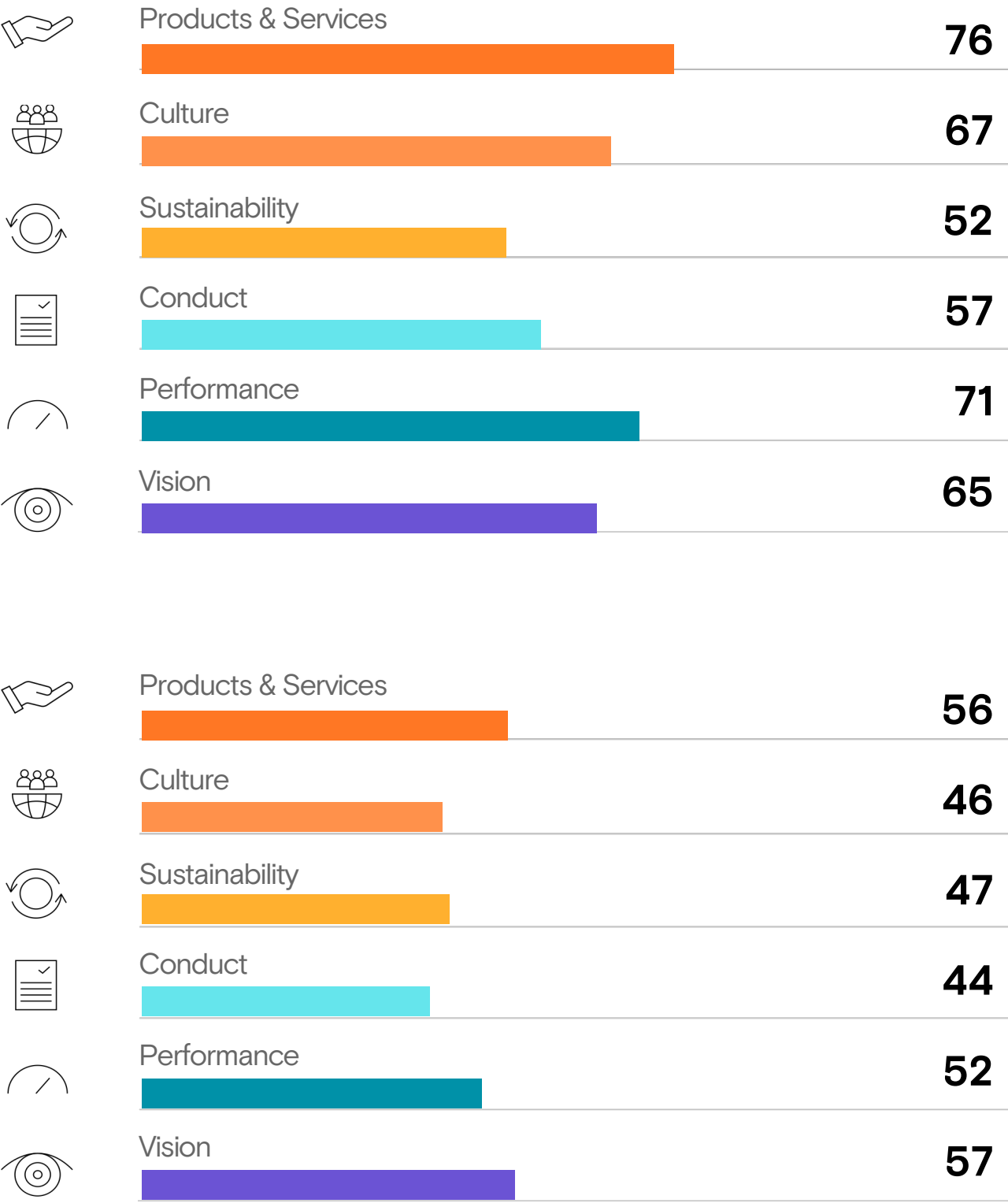
What actually matters to different regions

These below represents the factors that influence people's perception of an organization, capturing the most and least impactful ones. Some factors such as Products & Services were consistent across different markets, being the one that influences people's perception the most, except for Saudi emphasizing Conduct. Sustainability and Vision seemed to have a lower influence on people's perception.



British Airways vs Emirates

Emirates performed substantially better than British Airways across all pillars, resulting in a higher overall score. The global result was boosted by strong performance in both audience and media results for Emirates in the Middle East.



GLOBAL TRENDS

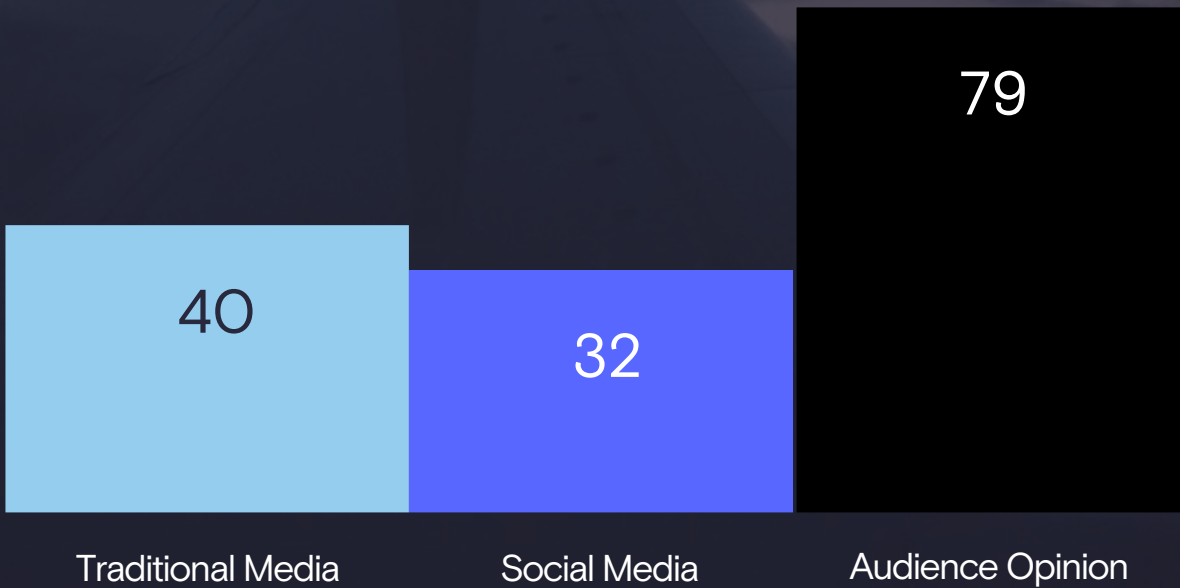


Emirates

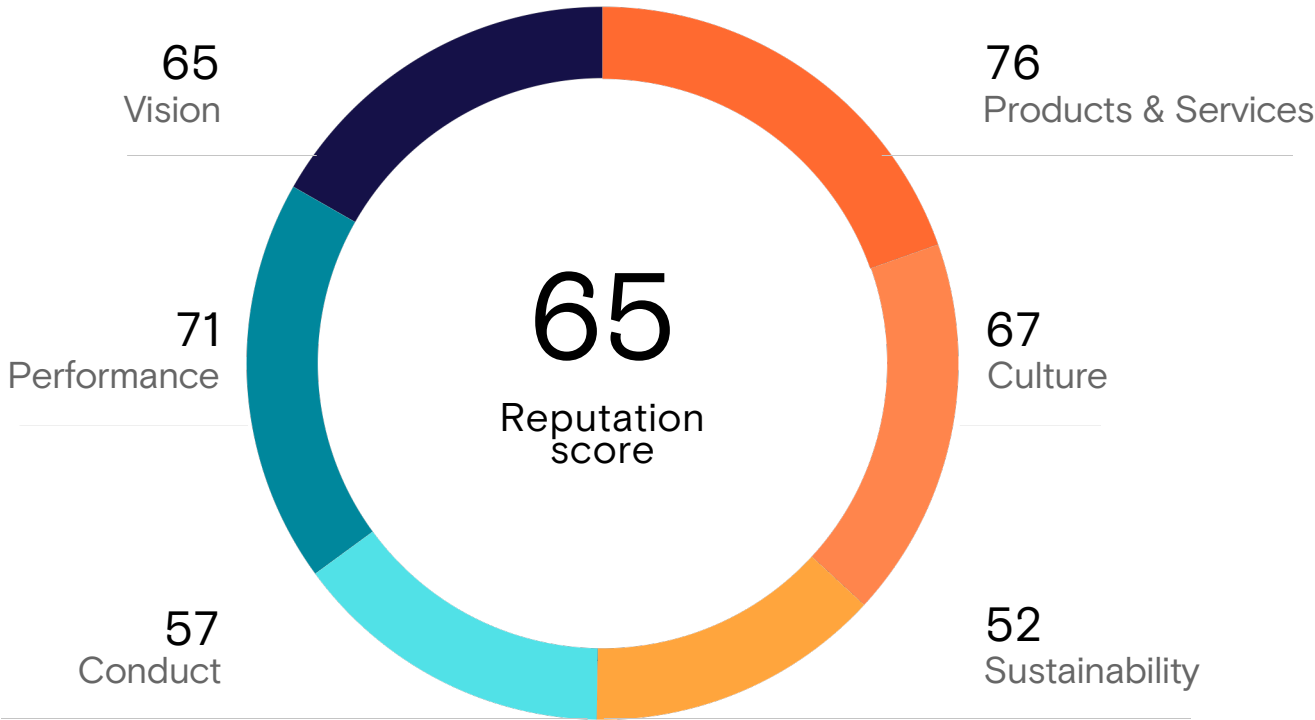
Emirates

Strong audience opinion and positive coverage from the UAE boosted Emirates’ score; opportunity to further Products & Services results with more earned social media coverage of Emirates’ offering.

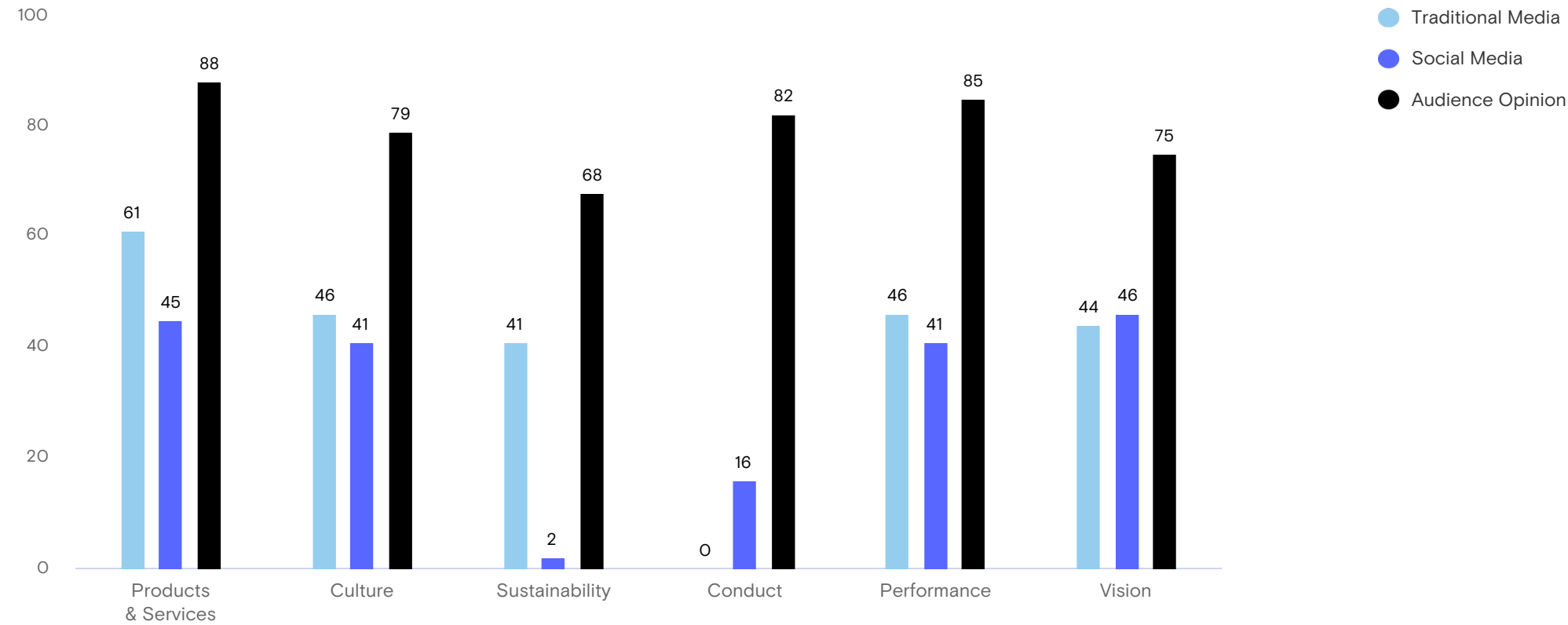
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Key Takeaways

Products & Services saw high volumes of positive and neutral traditional media content, primarily from the UAE, boosting that pillar's score. Positive topics included new routes and services, while neutral coverage included reporting on the Dubai floods in April, and resulting flight disruptions. These were not blamed on the airline, however, minimizing potential reputational damage – borne out in a high audience research Products & Services score for Emirates.

Whilst Conduct was the second most important reputational pillar in our audience research, there was no traditional media coverage on this topic for Emirates, demonstrating a potential opportunity to boost audience opinion even further.

Vision and Products & Services drove social media conversation. Vision-related posts were driven by awards, top airline rankings, and announcements around innovation and strategy for the future. However, this is one of the lesser influential reputational pillars, reducing its impact on the overall reputation score.

Awards also drove the Products & Services pillar on social media. Whilst this coverage was positive, it is likely not as impactful as first-person accounts of service and experiences available on board. Collaborating with influencers and passengers to 'show off' what Emirates has to offer could boost this result, and positively impact the airline's reputation in this area.

GLOBAL TRENDS

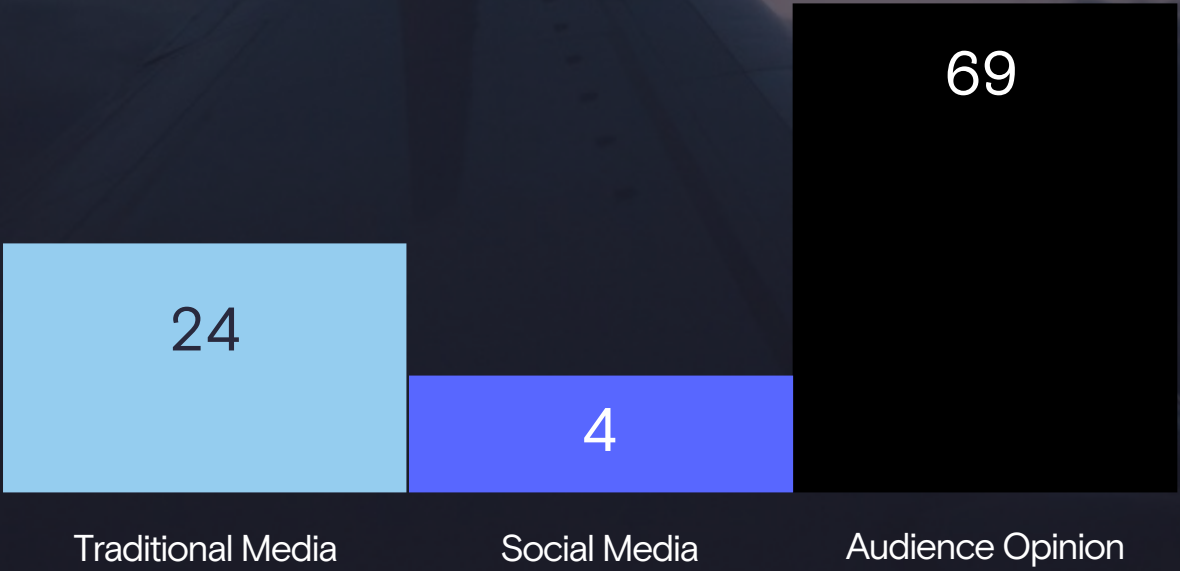


British Airways

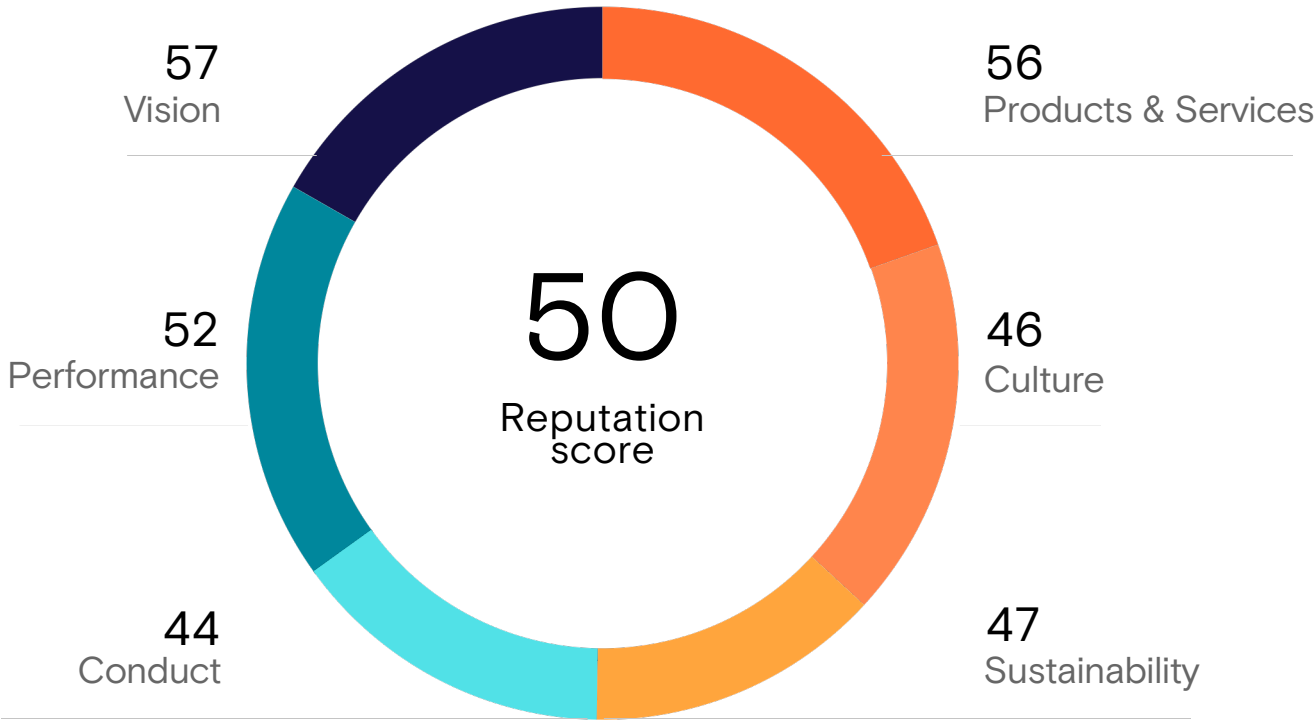
British Airways

Low scores on traditional and social media reduced British Airways’ overall reputation score, despite fair results from audience research. This suggests that criticism in the press and on social media has a limited impact on British Airways’ audiences.

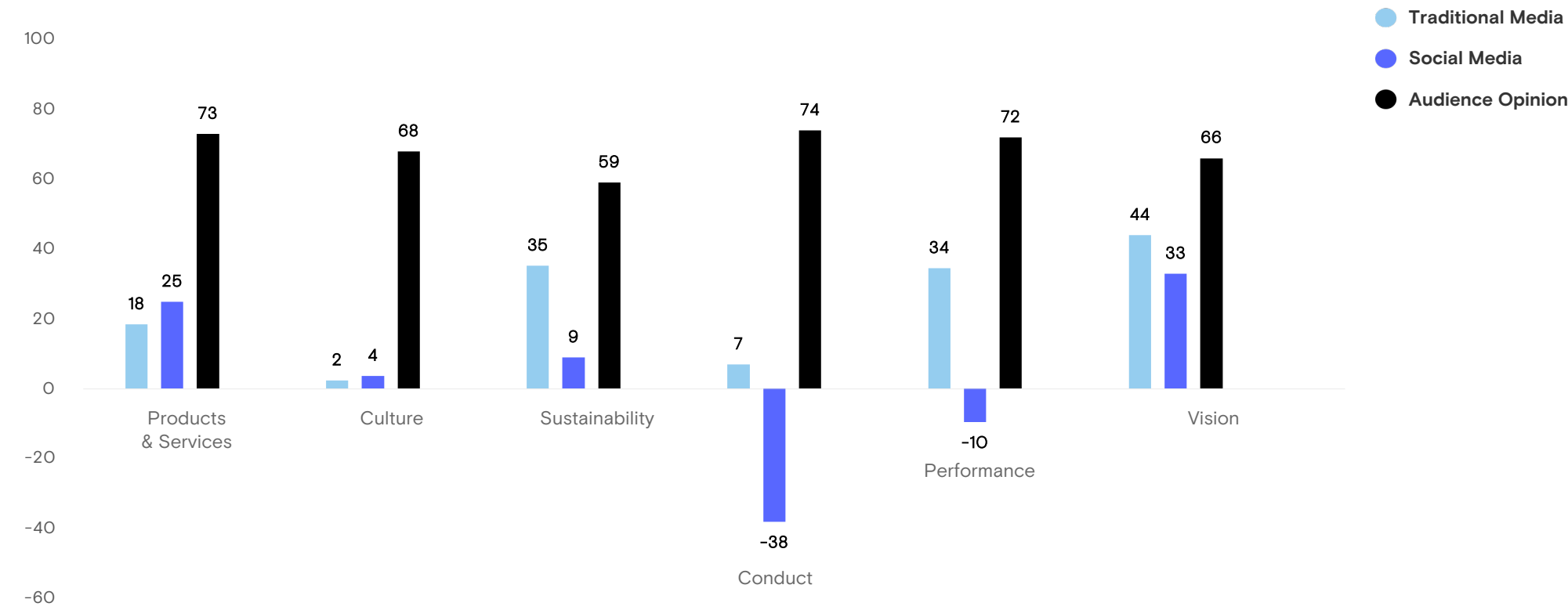
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



British Airways

Key Takeaways

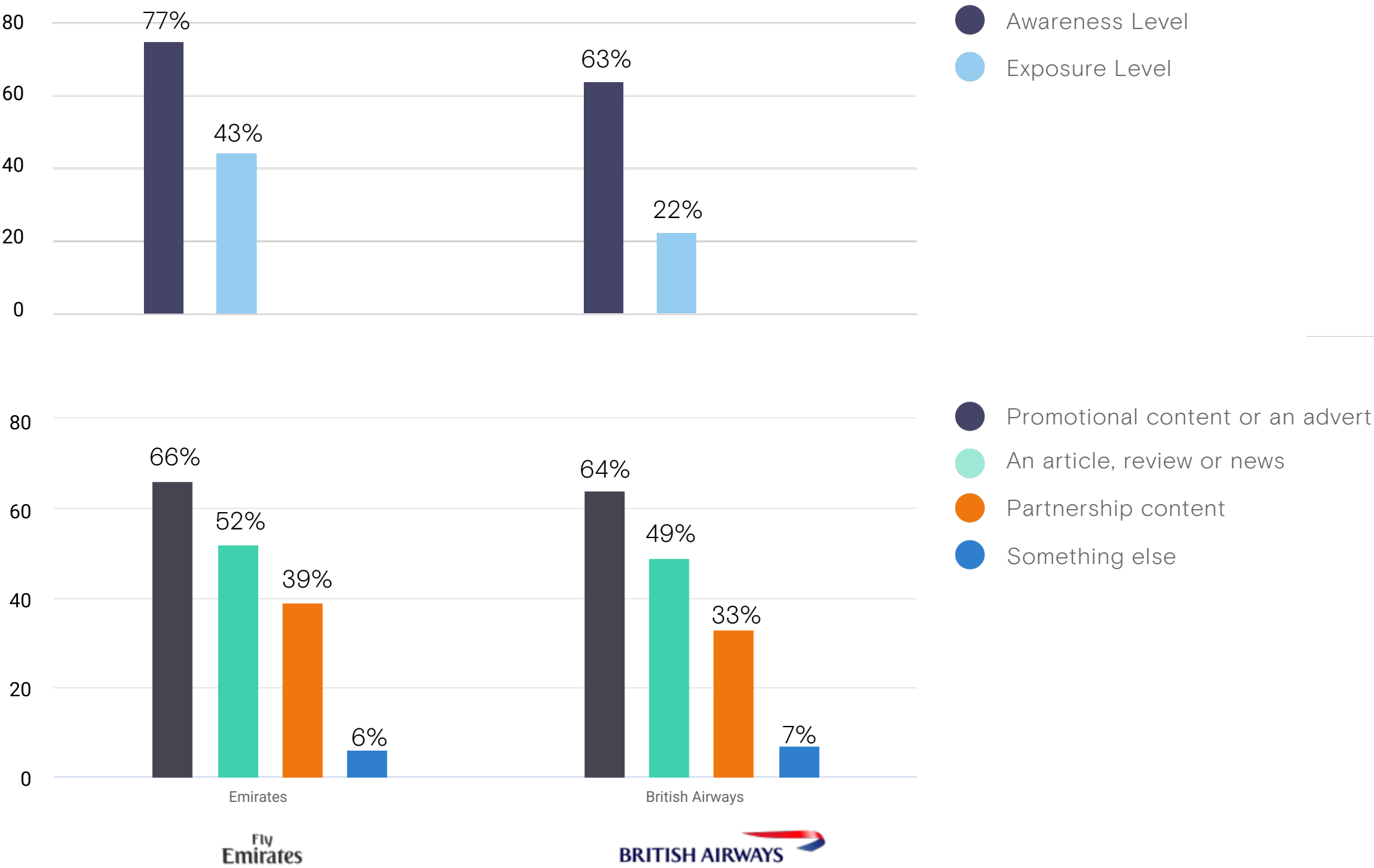
Results were extremely varied for British Airways across both the reputational pillars, and across data sources. The majority of traditional media coverage mentioned the Products & Services pillar, but its score was comparatively low due to the tone of said coverage (29% negative). All negative coverage came from the UK, and most of it from tabloid outlets which focused on negative passenger experiences, racist staff behavior and poor rankings in customer satisfaction surveys. Passengers also took to social media to complain directly to/about unsatisfactory service from British Airways.

Vision scores were boosted by positive financial results from British Airways owner IAG in traditional media, and by awards and branding-related posts on social media.

Conduct scored negatively in social media due to a range of issues including environmental conspiracy theories (which, while dubious in nature, did attract high engagement), criticism of British Airways' previous branding which removed the UK flag, outrage over treatment of a disabled passenger and accusations of discrimination. Performance-related social media posts were mostly about the airline's competition with Air Peace in Nigeria, which allegedly caused British Airways to drop its fares, resulting in a negative Performance score for social media.

The negative traditional and social media coverage could suggest that UK media and audiences might be more critical of or cynical towards local organizations. However, this isn't necessarily reflected in the audience opinion results, which are substantially higher than the media scores.

Awareness and exposure



Awareness level: represents the percentage of people who have heard and know something or heard and know a lot about the airline.

Exposure level: represents the percentage of people who have heard or seen something about this airline.

More people are familiar with Emirates than British Airways (77% vs 63%).

Emirates leads in exposure (43%), indicating that more recent news or information about Emirates had more success in reaching the audience. This is supported by the content types respondents reported being exposed to for both airlines, which showed a very similar breakdown, indicating a difference in reach rather than content type.

The gap between awareness and exposure is larger for British Airways (41%) than for Emirates (34%). This might imply that while people know about British Airways, they are less exposed to recent updates or news about it compared to Emirates.

The majority have consumed promotional contents, followed by reviews and news.

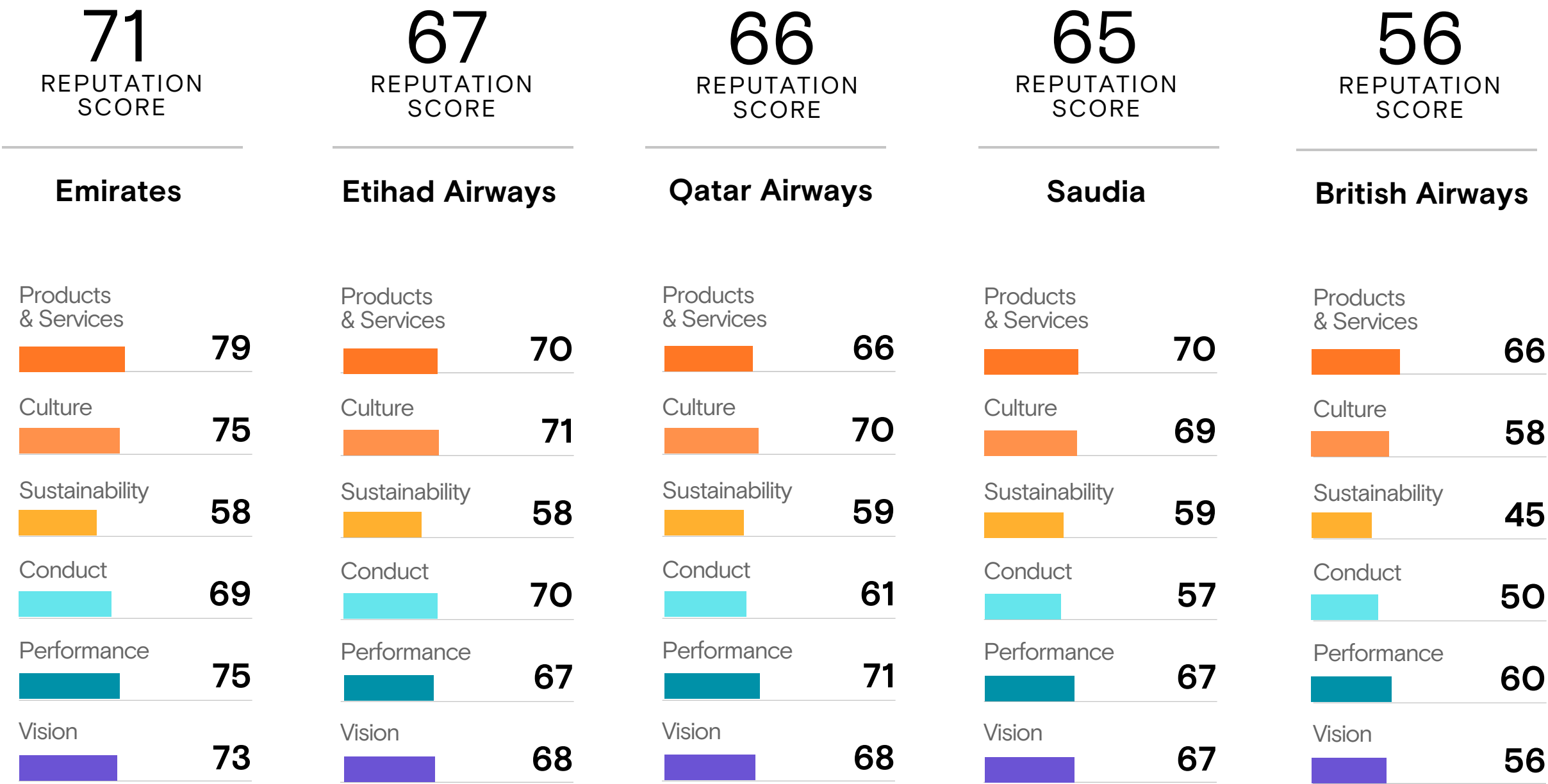
A photograph of an airplane wing flying over a sea of white clouds, with a sunset or sunrise sky in shades of orange and brown in the background.

UAE, KSA: Emirates, Etihad Airways,
Qatar Airways, Saudia, British Airways

Airlines Reputation Trends

Middle East-based airlines received the most positivity from the media and audiences in that region, out-performing other markets

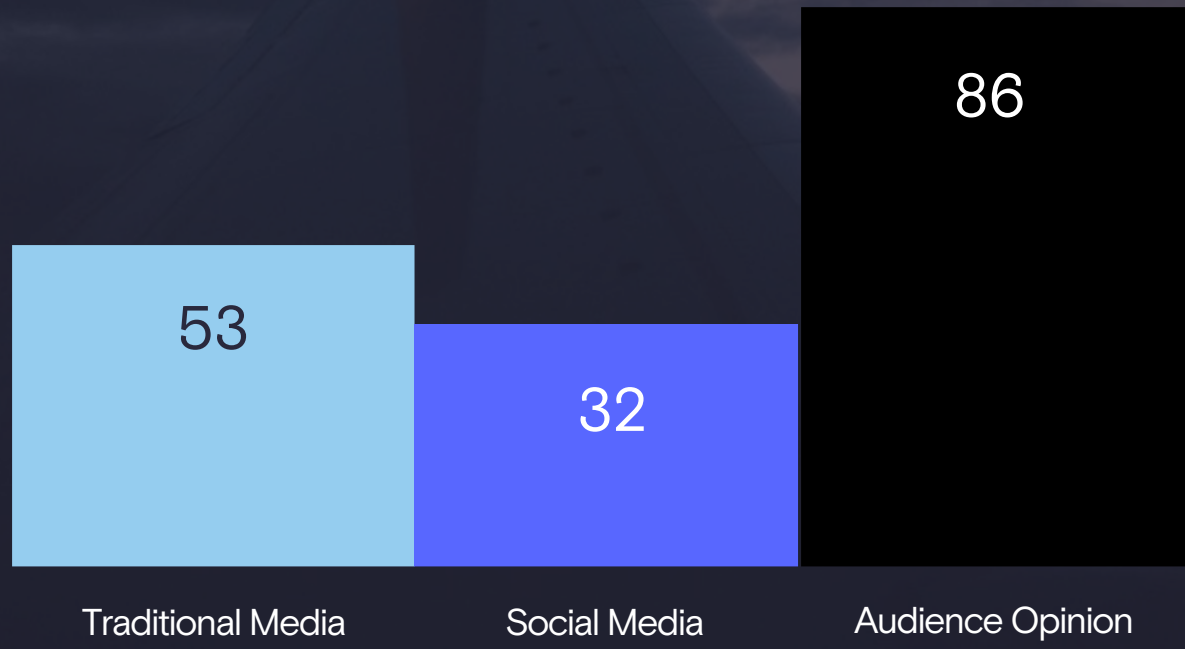
The Middle East saw strong favorability towards home-grown airlines, demonstrated through the tonality of media coverage as well as audience responses. Disruptions caused by the Dubai floods in April were reported mostly neutrally, minimizing impact on the overall reputation of affected airlines. Emirates had the strongest overall reputation score as well as the best scores on audience opinion and in traditional media coverage, thanks to a range of positive, proactive communications straddling several pillars.



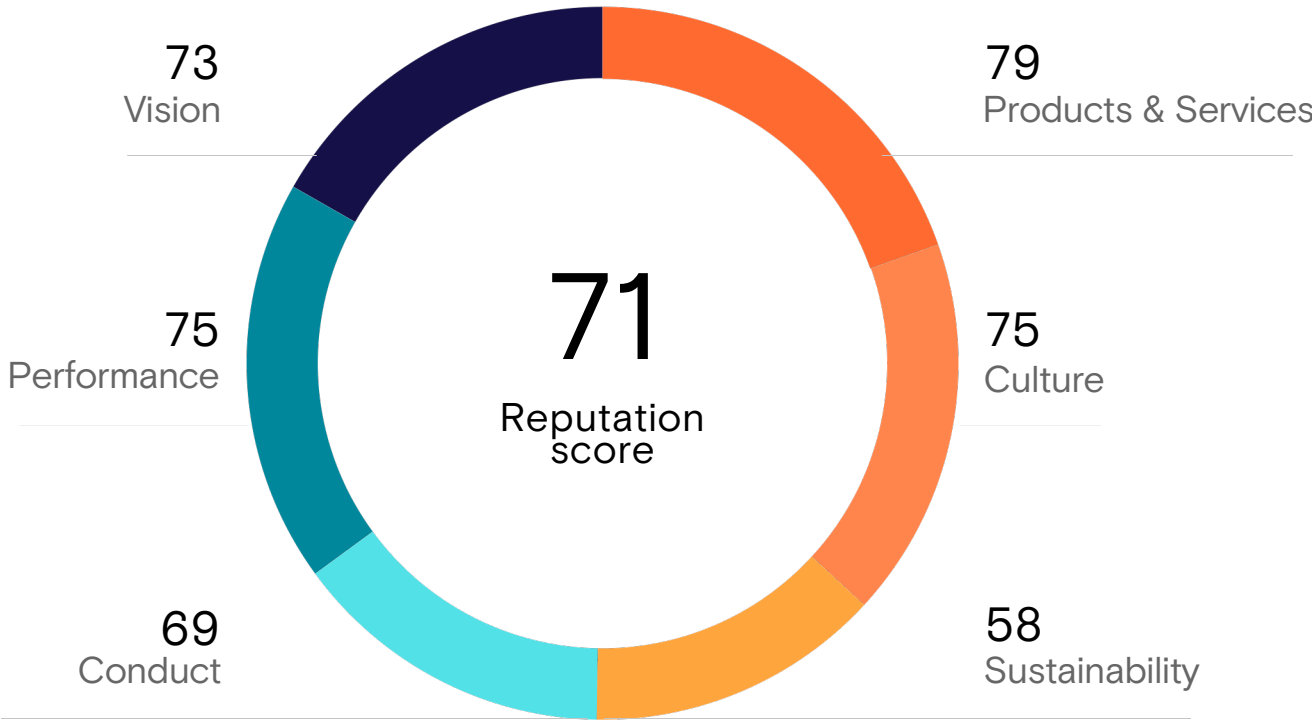
Emirates

Emirates secured the highest overall reputation score in any market for any tracked airline in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, demonstrating the favorability enjoyed by the brand in its home market.

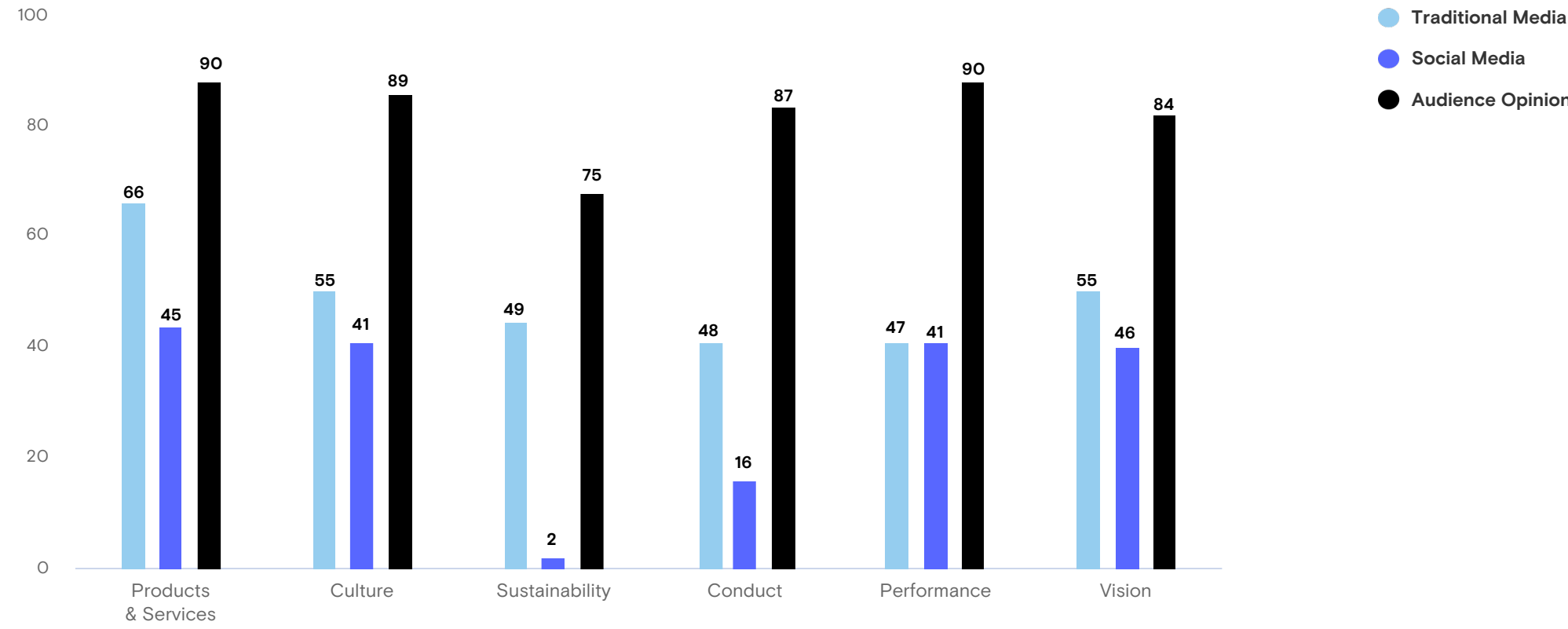
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Emirates

Key Takeaways

April's Dubai floods were a considerable driver of traditional media coverage for Products & Services, but as most coverage was positive or neutral (no blame was assigned to the airline for the freak weather event, and many articles noted what Emirates was doing to keep customers informed and looked after), it didn't negatively impact its score. Sustainability was next most prevalent traditional media topic, driven by sustainable fuel and sponsorship of community and cultural events. Emirates' Middle Eastern traditional coverage was relatively unique within this study in having proactive Sustainability communications.

Indeed, strong results were seen across all pillars in traditional media, with very limited negative content, in line with the region's media landscape.

Vision and Products & Services drove social media volumes. Vision discussion centered on awards and announcements around strategy and growth. However, as this is one of the pillars least important to respondents, the positivity of such posts had slightly limited impact on Emirates' overall reputation score.

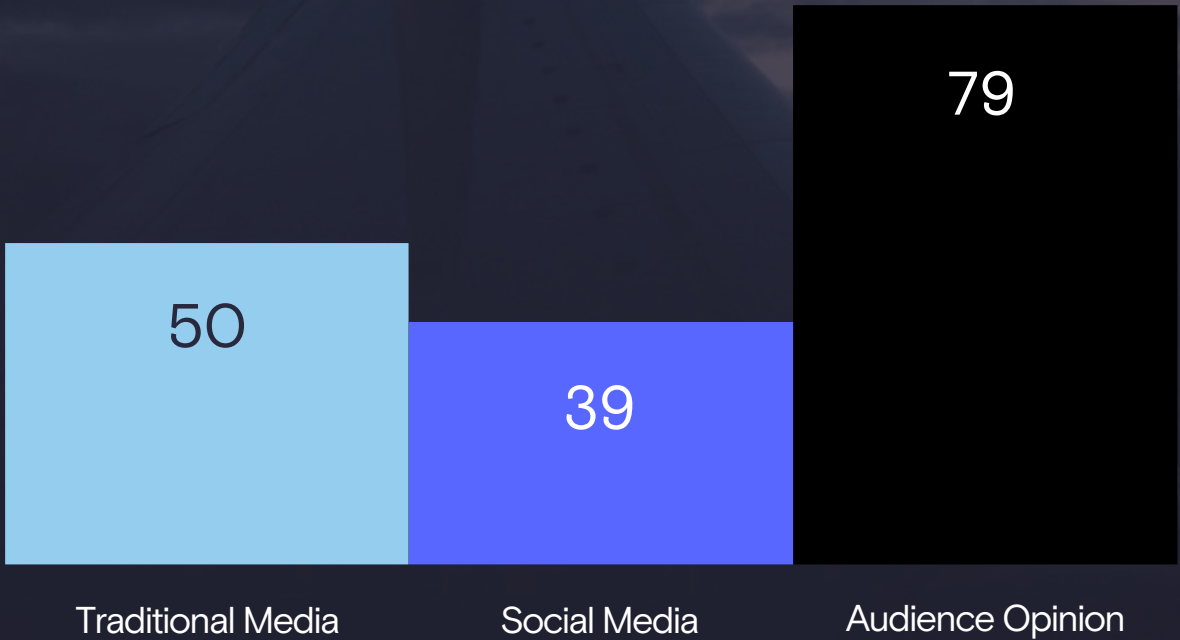
Social conversations around Products & Services tended to derive from trade handles sharing news of industry awards. Whilst demonstrating credibility for Emirates, more personal testimonials and stories might boost this result in the future.

As social media scores were lower than those in traditional media, increasing the opportunity for positive organic discussion may bear fruit. However, audience scores were extremely favorable, demonstrating the loyalty and positivity felt for the brand in the region.

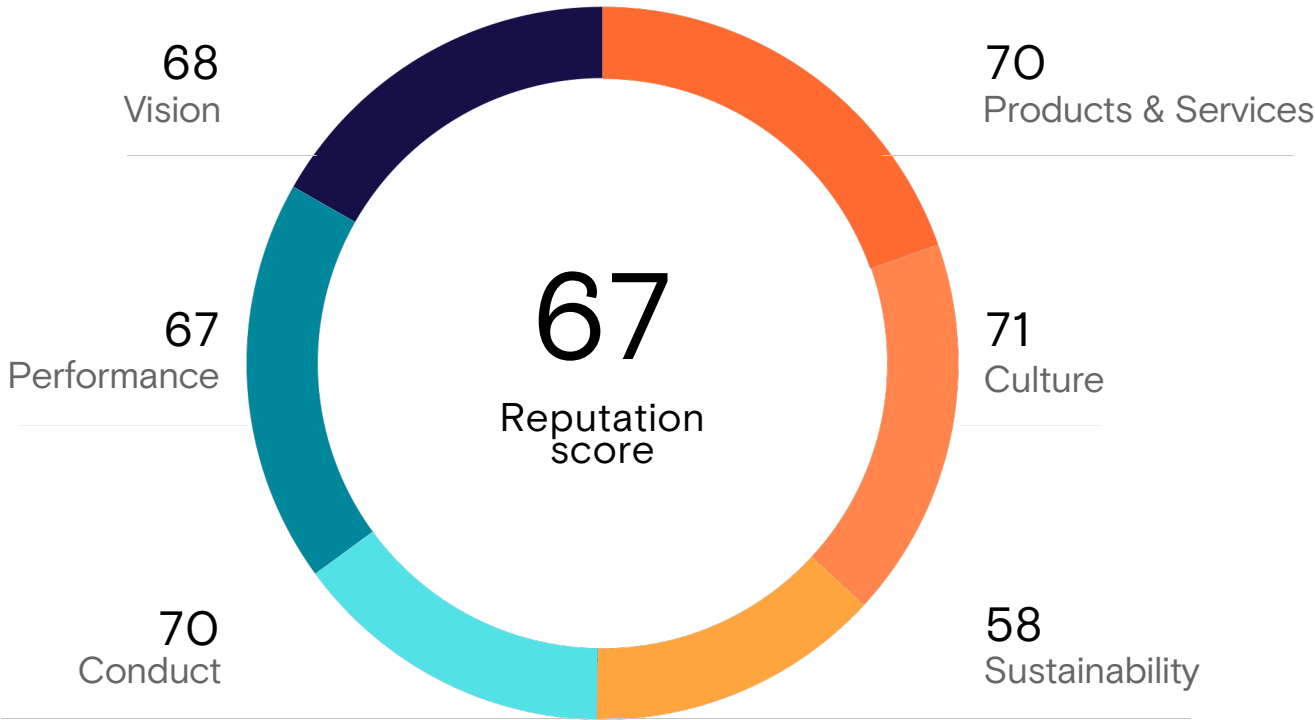
Etihad

Etihad scored the second highest overall reputation score of any airline in any market, thanks to positive, proactive media coverage across a range of pillars.

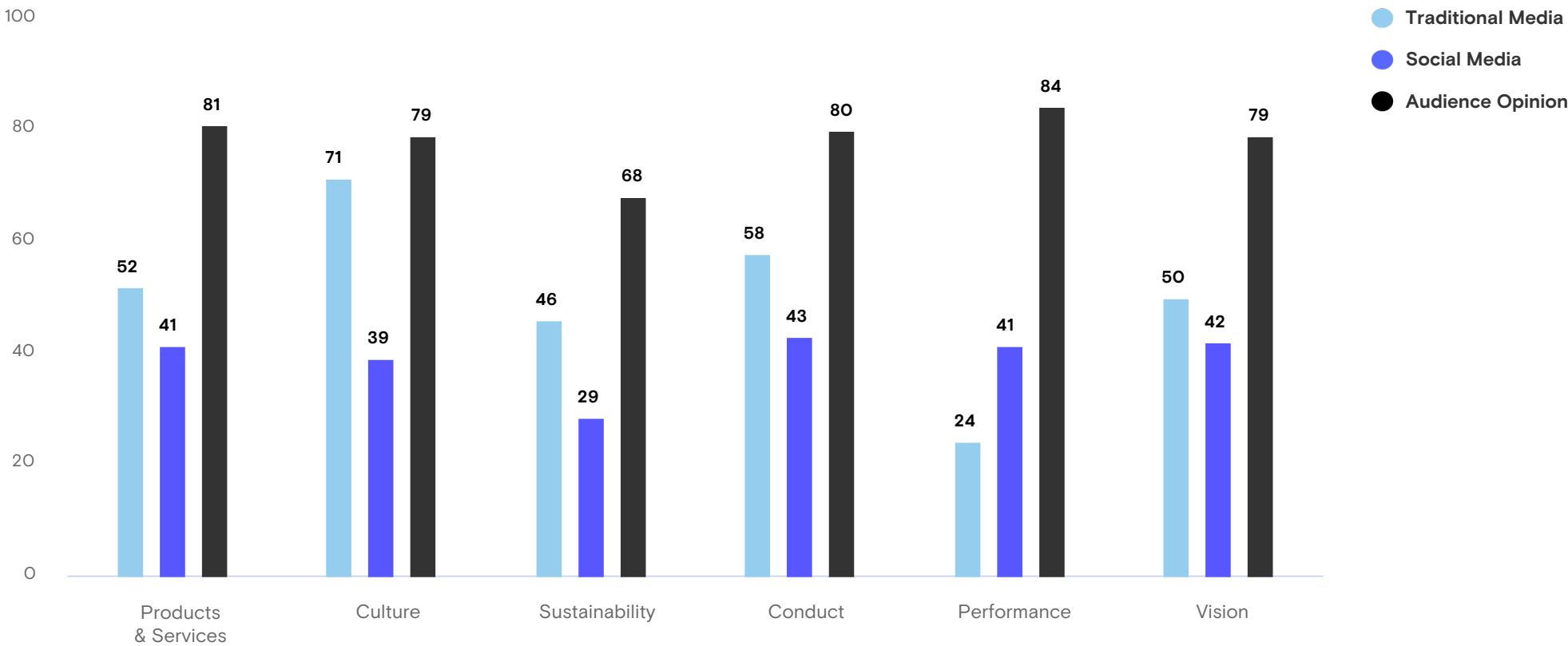
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Etihad

Key Takeaways

New routes and codeshare agreements were key drivers of Etihad's traditional media content, particularly for the Products & Services pillar. Culture was the highest scoring pillar in traditional media, thanks to strongly positive reporting on new jobs and the fact that Culture is one of the most influential factors on UAE and KSA audiences' perceptions of airlines.

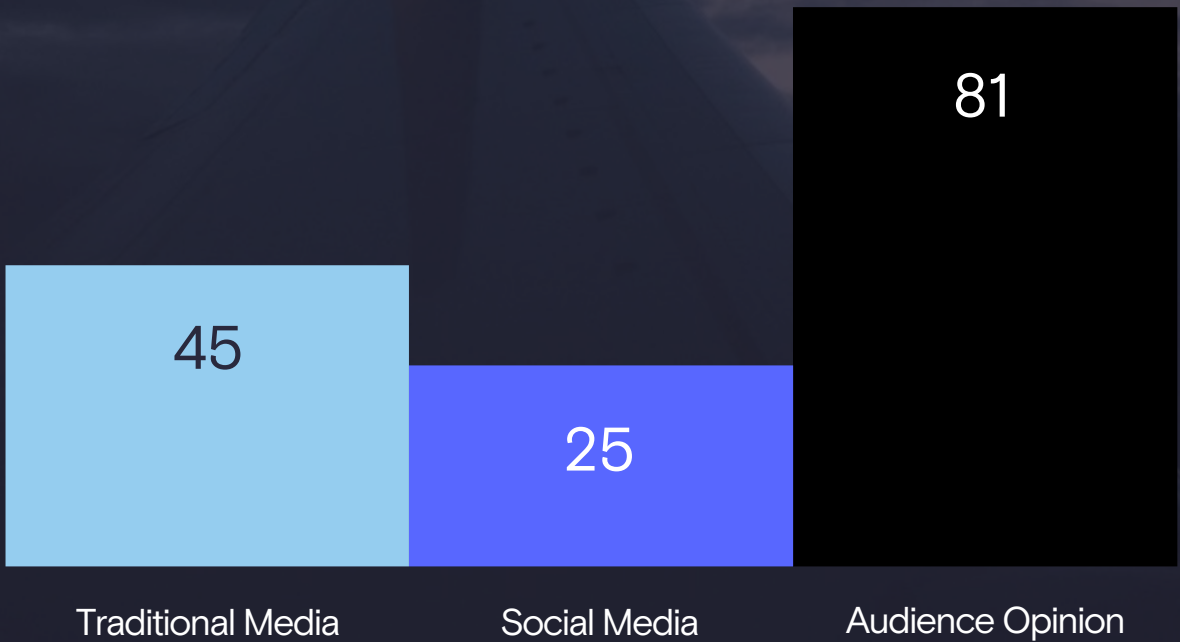
New amenity products, increased routes and trade awards generated positive social media scores for Products & Services, Performance and Vision. The Sustainability pillar's social media score was boosted by sponsorship, particularly that of the Chennai Super Kings cricket team.

As with Emirates, social media scores were lower than those of traditional media, suggesting the opportunity for more focus on that channel (particularly that encouraging organic discussion from users). Etihad also saw considerably lower exposure results (46% compared to Emirates' 67%), further suggesting a need to increase media visibility across a range of channels. Increased proactive media focus could result in even higher audience opinion scores.

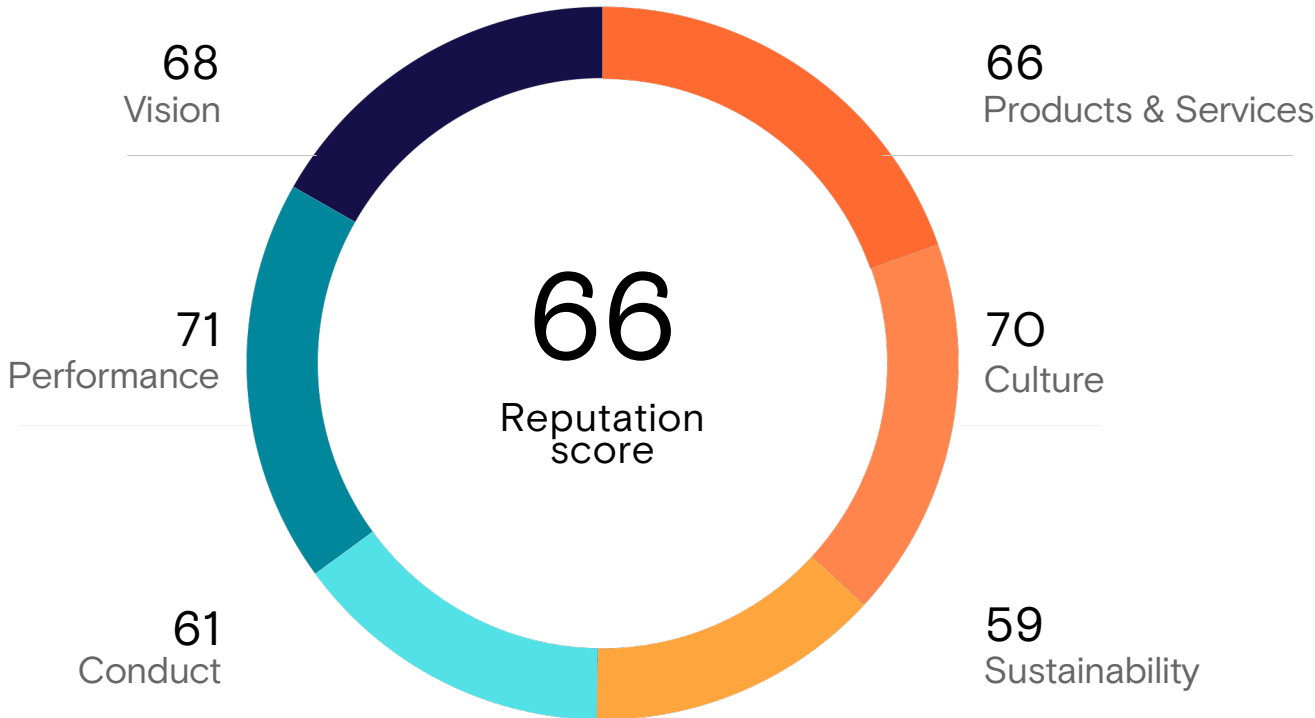
Qatar Airways

Strong audience opinion counteracted low media volumes, to place Qatar Airways third in the Middle East’s reputation scores.

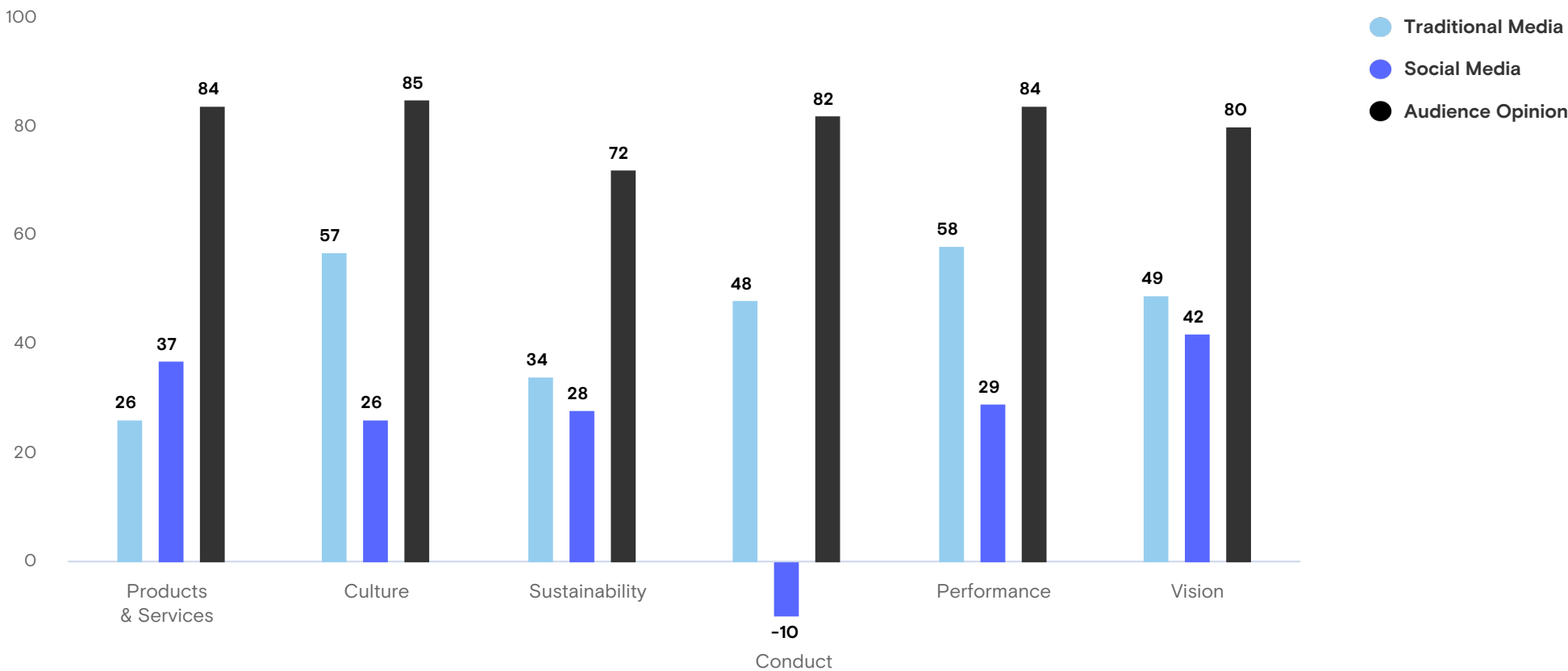
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Qatar Airways

Key Takeaways

Traditional media volumes for Qatar Airways were significantly lower than the other tracked airlines in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, reducing the likely impact of its coverage. Although the majority of Qatar Airways' media coverage mentioned Products & Services, some negative coverage around injuries caused by turbulence on board a Qatar flight drove down its score. Coverage boosting Performance, Vision and Culture included news of its first AI cabin crew, new routes and the airline featuring in the top 20 world's safest airlines rankings.

Sponsorship of the Asian Cup accounted for around a quarter of social media coverage, but the neutral tone of posts combined with the lesser influence of the Sustainability pillar limited the positive reputational impact for Qatar Airways.

Products & Services, the most influential pillar, accounted for the majority of social media posts, with awards, routes and posts from passengers flying with the airline driving volumes. Whilst the majority of this was positive, some frustrations from passengers during their travels did drag the score down somewhat.

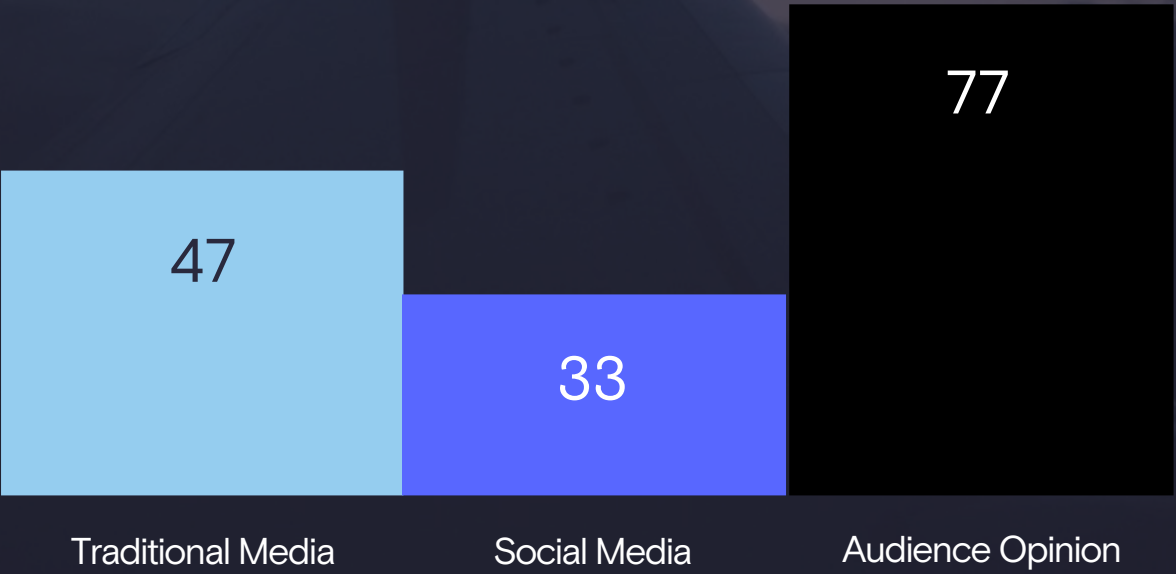
Vision secured the highest social media score for Qatar Airways due to mostly positive posts on trade awards, partnerships and marketing collaborations. Whilst Conduct scored negatively for social media, with posts including criticism of the former CEO and allegations of the airline intimidating a foreign citizen, volumes were sufficiently low as to limit likely exposure to broader audiences.

Audience opinion scores for Qatar Airways were very positive, particularly in comparison to lower volumes of media coverage (compared to other airlines in this study). This suggests the airline may well enjoy strong goodwill amongst the public in the Middle East, which can help it weather publicity crises in the future. Ensuring a steady flow of proactive communications can solidify this.

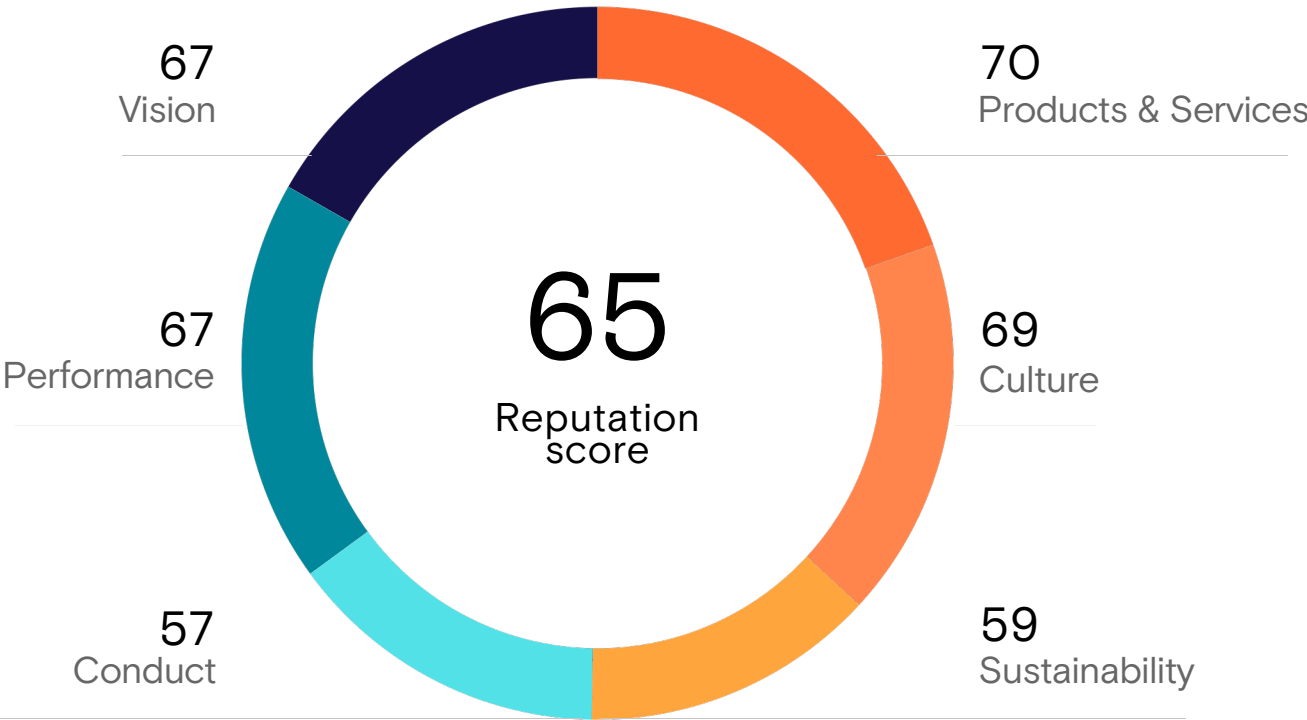
Saudia

Despite having slightly higher levels of audiences recalling exposure than other Middle Eastern airlines, Saudia saw the lowest reputation score among such brands, indicating the opportunity for further building on audience perception and awareness.

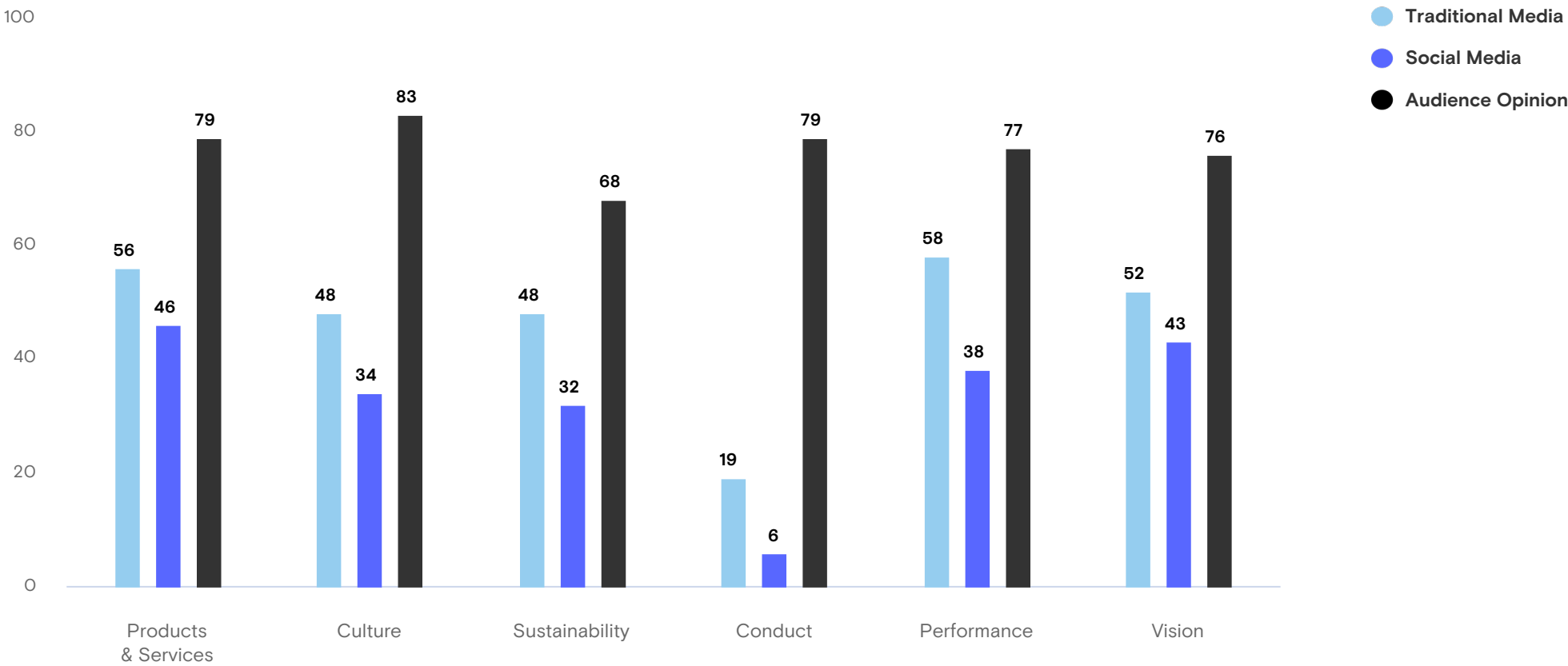
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Saudia

Key Takeaways

Traditional media key coverage drivers included passenger numbers and routes for the Hajj season, new AI services and partnerships. These stories boosted scores for the Products & Services, Performance and Vision pillars. Conduct scored comparatively lowly due to a small handful of negative articles including an accusation of a monopoly and high prices on Al Jawf trains.

Trends were similar across social media, with Performance and Vision pillars being advanced by news that Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund was considering acquiring Saudia.

The most engaged-with posts on social media included the announcement of BLVD Runway, an aviation-themed entertainment experience supported by Saudia, praise for food on board, price promotions and criticisms of pricing strategy.

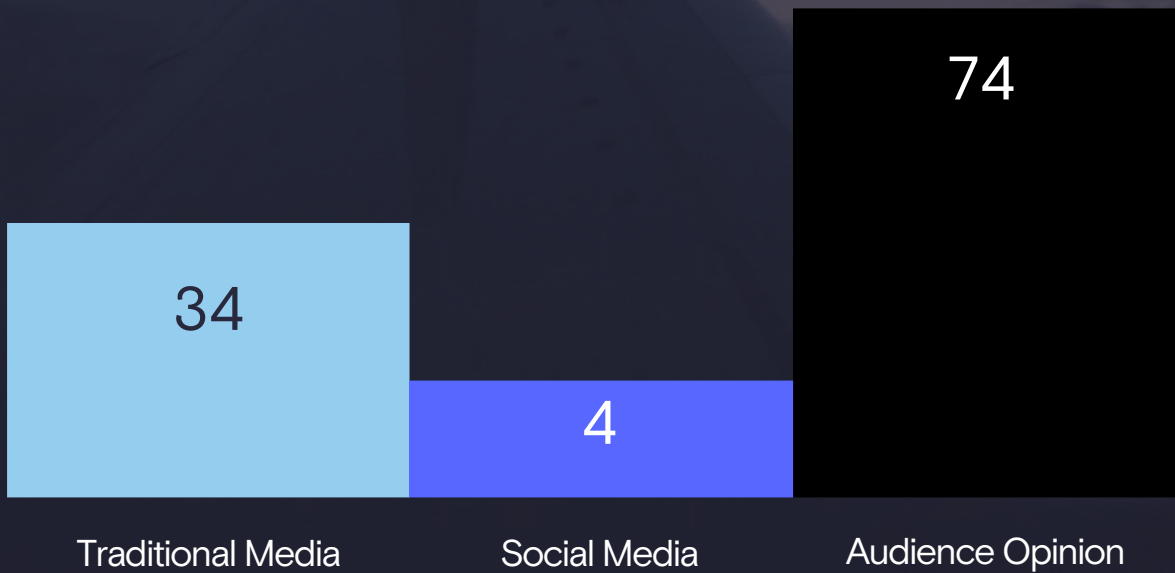
Conduct's social media score was driven down by complaints around Saudia's branding changing, criticism of pricing strategy and frustrated customers complaining of a lack of transparency.

Although the audience opinion score for Conduct was strong, it might be advantageous to realize further opportunities for positive media coverage on the topic, as it does influence public perception in the Middle East to the same extent as Products & Services and Performance.

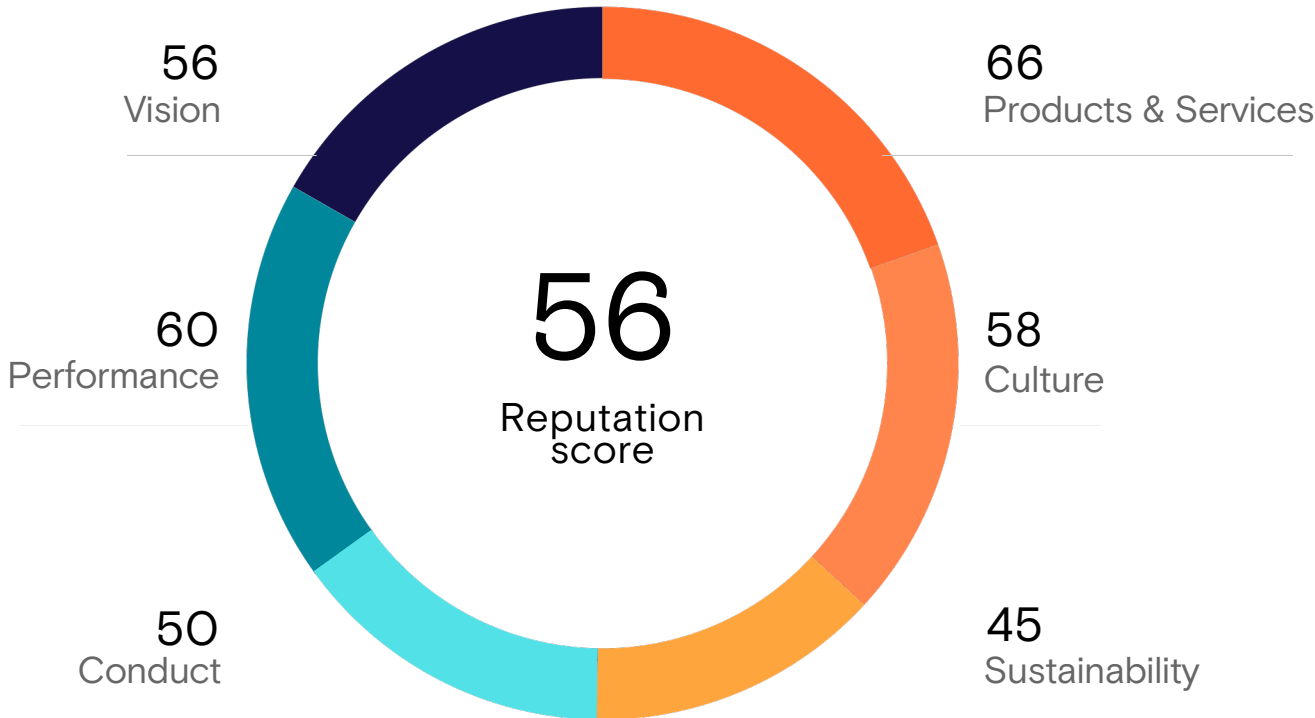
British Airways

British Airways received the lowest scores in the Middle East, but still scored higher than in the UK.

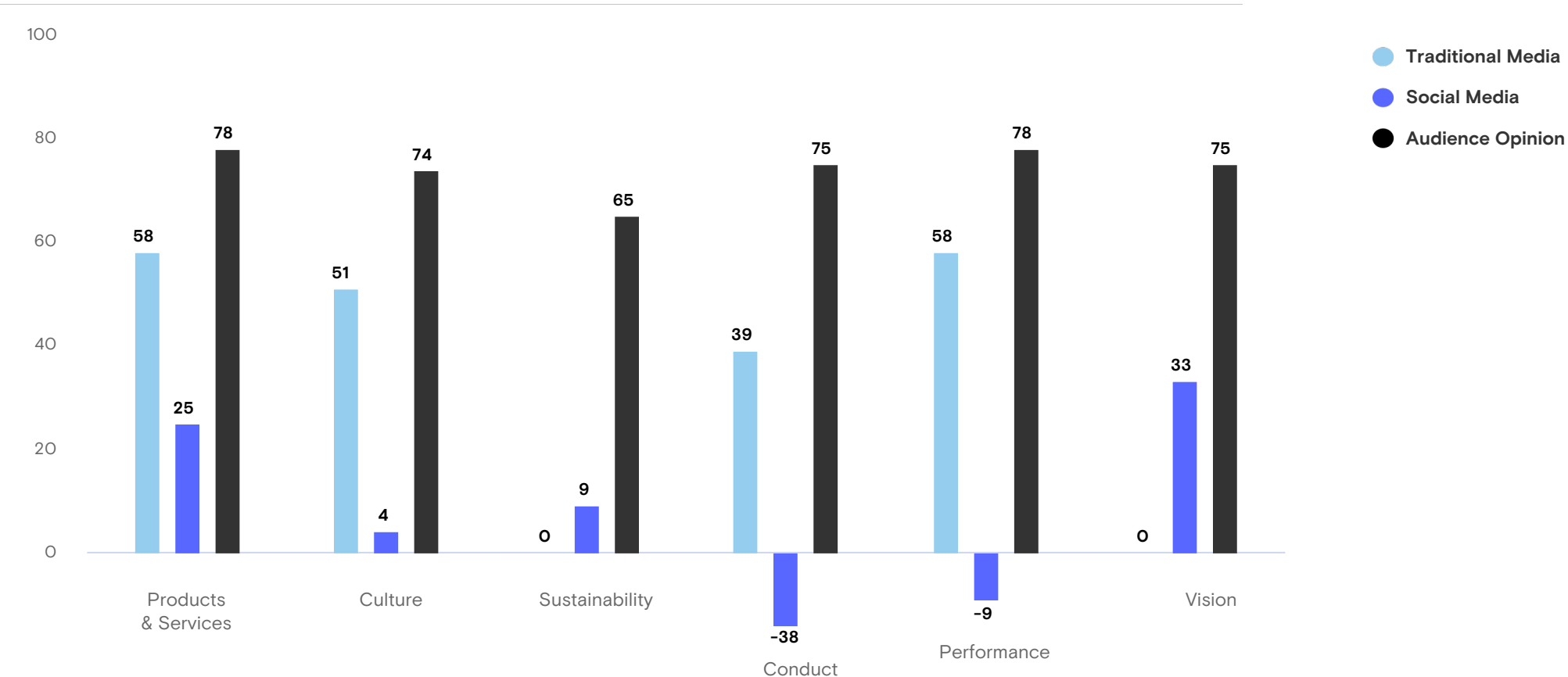
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



British Airways

Key Takeaways

British Airways had the lowest traditional media score in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, due to very low volumes of coverage, reflected in audience exposure (only 39% of respondents recalled seeing communications about British Airways in the region). Articles that did appear included news on routes to the Middle East, investment in its digital systems, and lesser mentions in airlines rankings. No coverage appeared in relation to the Sustainability or Vision pillars.

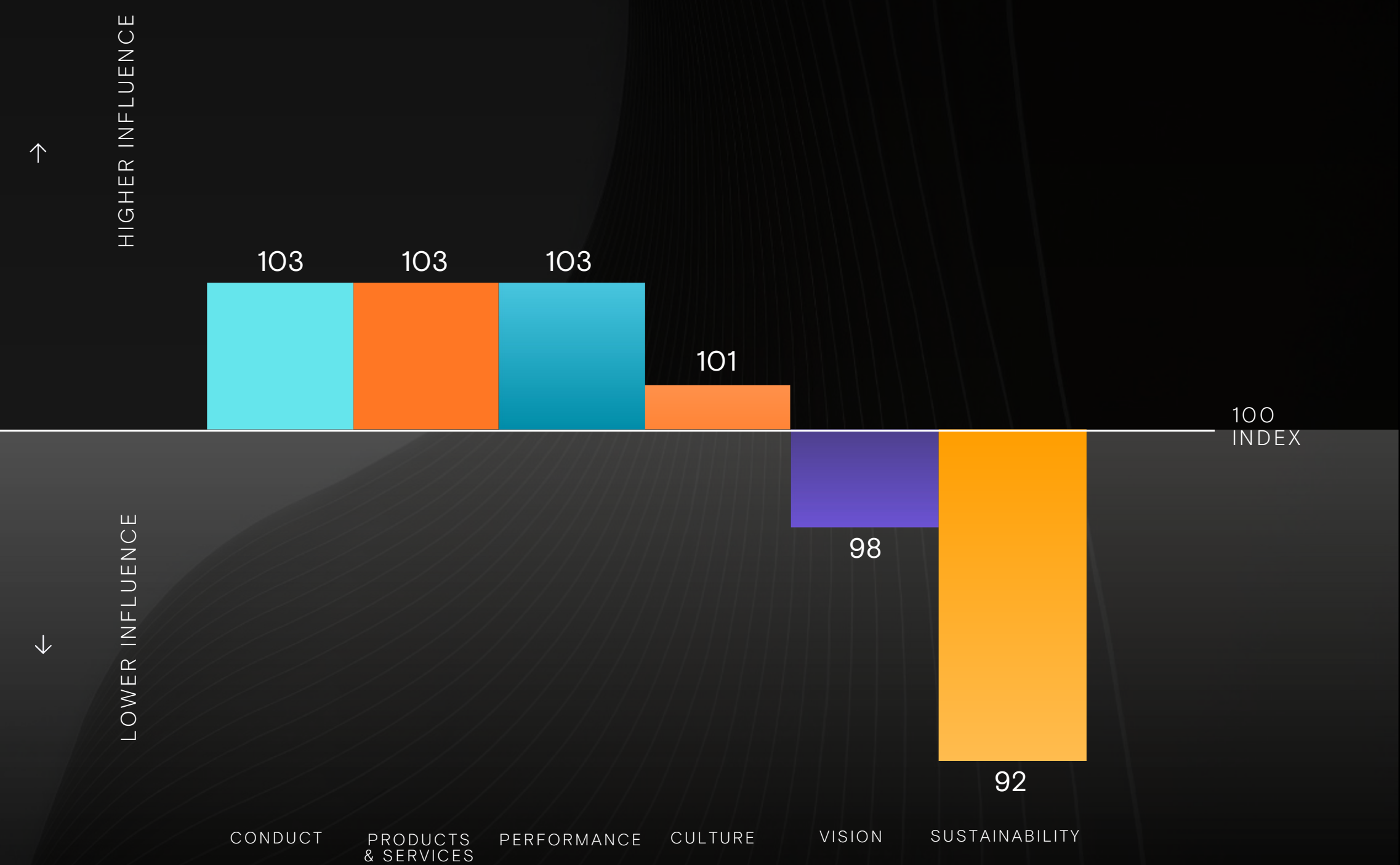
Branding and industry awards boosted the social media score for Vision, while negativity drove down the Product & Services social media score, despite high volumes. This was primarily due to criticism from passengers over customer service and experience.

Conduct scored negatively in social media due to allegations positioned as systemic, such as causing so called 'chemtrails', poor attitudes towards disabled passengers, discriminatory approaches to routes, and a historical issue involving the removal of the UK flag from British Airways' livery. Negative Performance social media conversation was entirely about Air Peace, a new airline in Nigeria, eating into BA's market share and causing it to drop its fares.

Despite the lack of positive media coverage, and relatively low levels of reported audience exposure and awareness, British Airways still received higher audience opinion scores in the UAE and Saudi Arabia than in the UK, further suggesting cultural differences in how audiences view airlines.

What actually matters

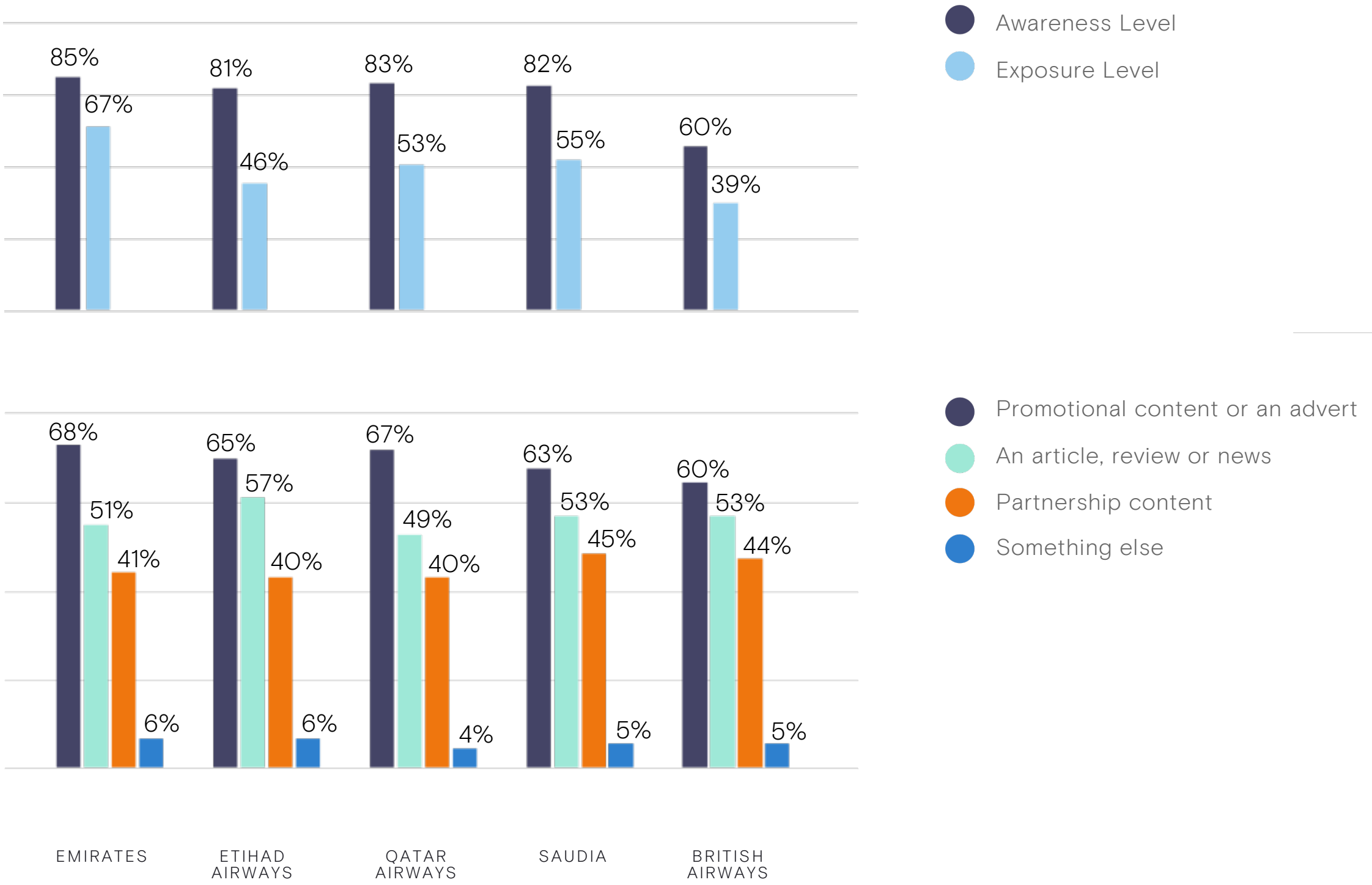
Conduct, Products & Services and Performance of equal importance to UAE and Saudi Arabia audiences



There is little distinction between the top 4 most important reputational pillars to UAE and Saudi Arabian audiences. As with the UK, Conduct has moved up slightly compared to global results.

However, Sustainability is slightly less important to audiences in this region than globally.

Awareness and exposure



Awareness level: represents the percentage of people who have heard and know something or heard and know a lot about the airline.

Exposure level: represents the percentage of people who have heard or seen something about this airline.

Awareness and exposure levels for Middle East-based airlines were largely homogeneous, with Emirates faring considerably better on both metrics. This could be due to the strong brand presence of local carriers and their connection to national and cultural values.

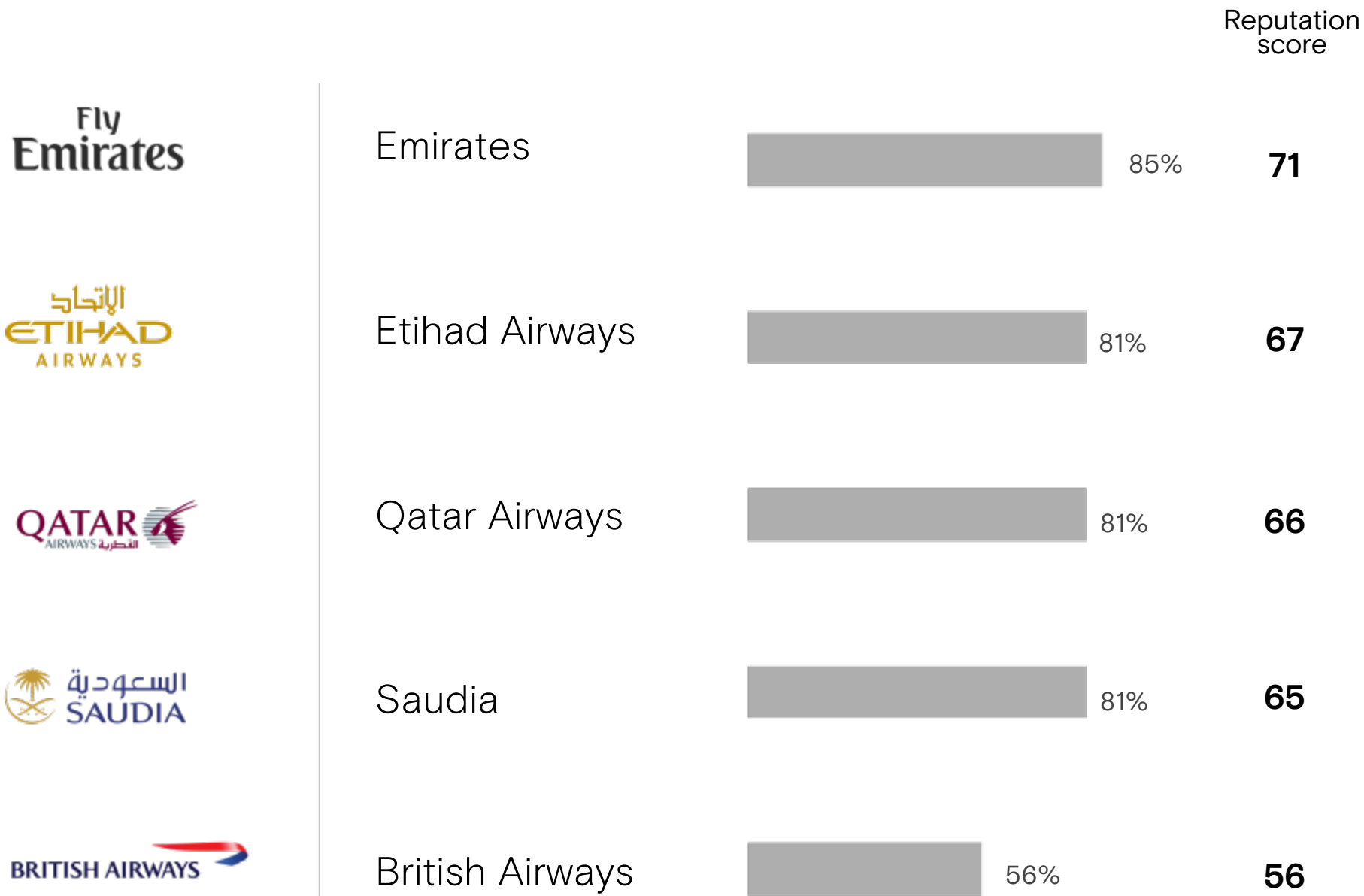
Awareness and exposure levels for British Airways were lowest among airlines across the Middle East area.

People in the Middle East have mostly consumed promotional content or an advert, followed by reviews and partnership content.

Respondents have reported the highest media consumption for Emirates and Qatar Airways.

Usage Likelihood

Likelihood to use broadly follows the reputation score, suggesting that for audiences in this market, reputation and likelihood to use might be more closely linked.



- Respondents across the Middle East showed largely a similar attitude towards using the products and/or services of national carriers.
- British Airways fell behind, scoring considerably lower on the same scale.



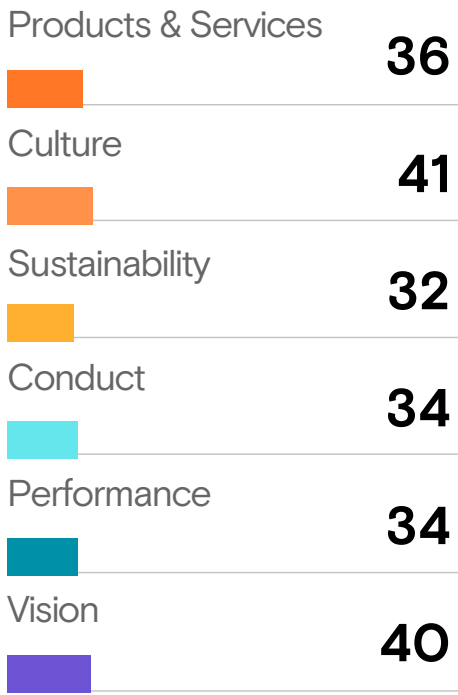
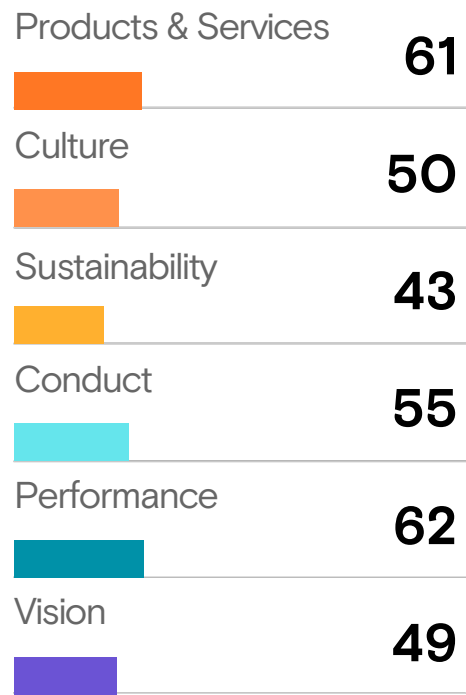
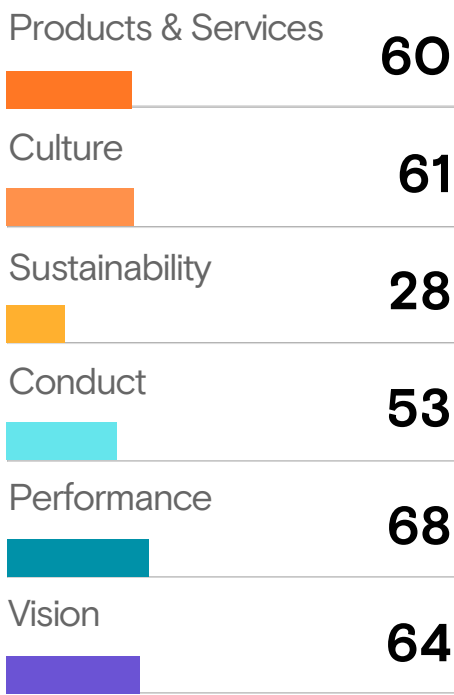
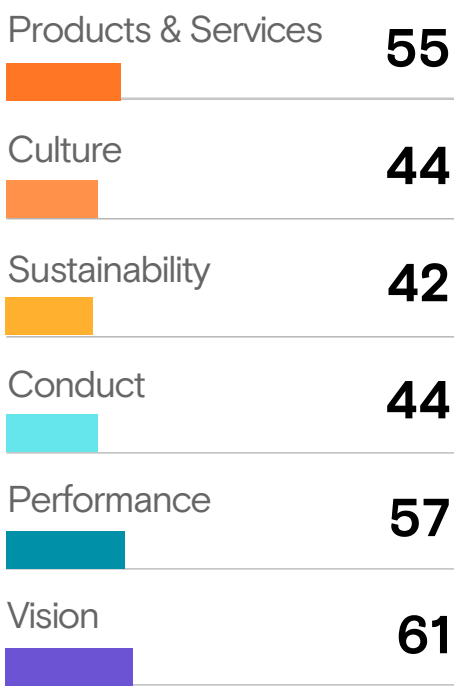
A photograph of an airplane wing and tail fin flying over a sea of white clouds. The sky is a mix of orange and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The wing is dark and sleek, with a red tail fin.

UK: British Airways, Emirates,
Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines

Airlines Reputation Trends

Emirates secured the highest reputation score, despite lower awareness and media coverage levels.

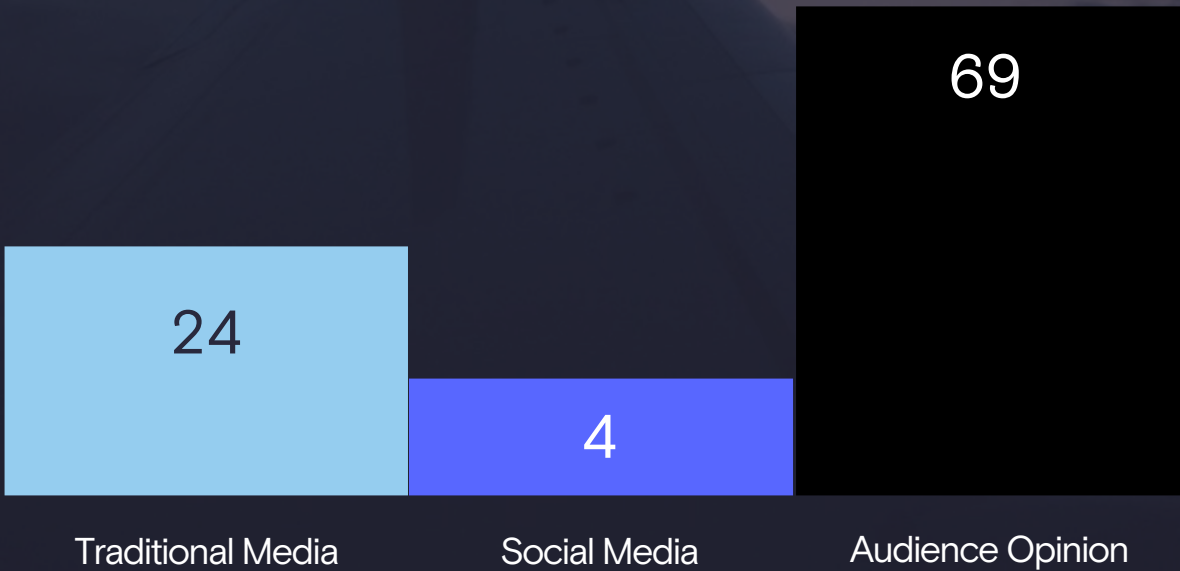
Emirates received the best overall score in the UK, despite a relatively low amount of traditional media coverage. A seemingly higher tendency within both the British press and public to criticize and express frustration with British Airways resulted in the airline having a low score, despite having the highest volumes of both traditional and social media and the highest levels of awareness and exposure within the public.



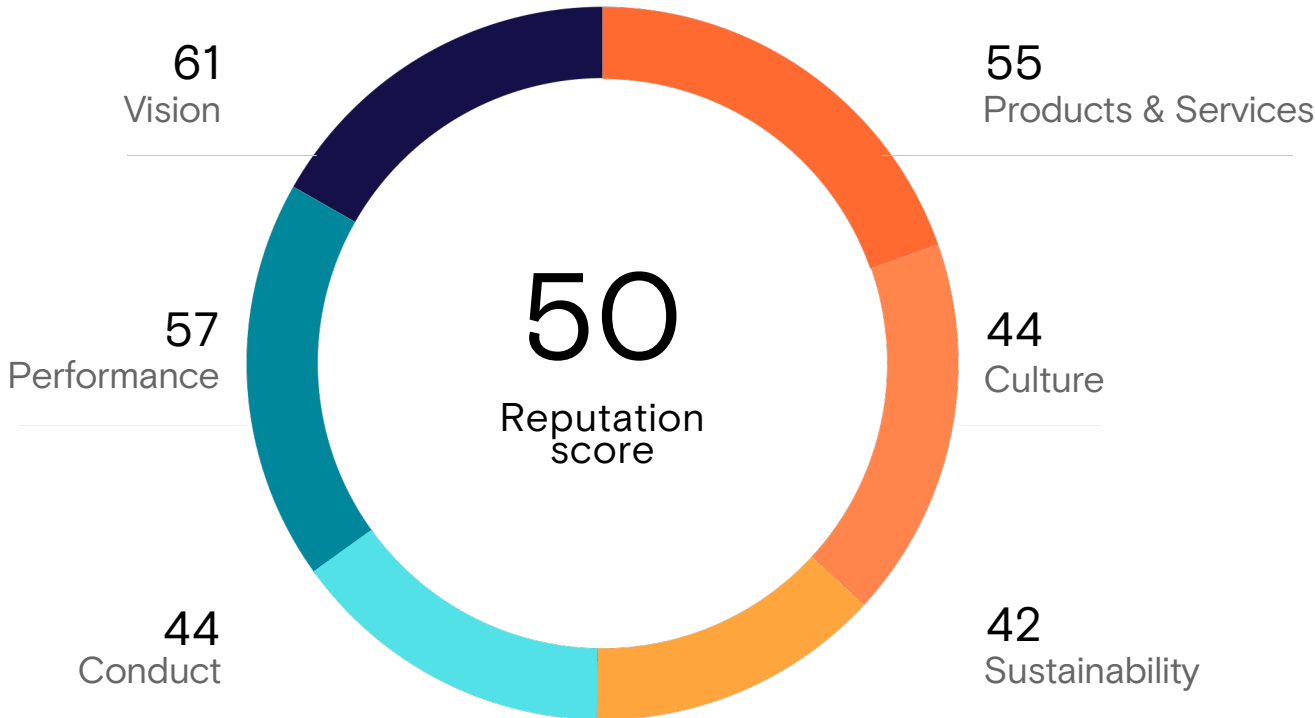
British Airways

Criticism from UK press and customer complaints dragged down Products & Services scores, but audience opinion appears not to have been dented by this.

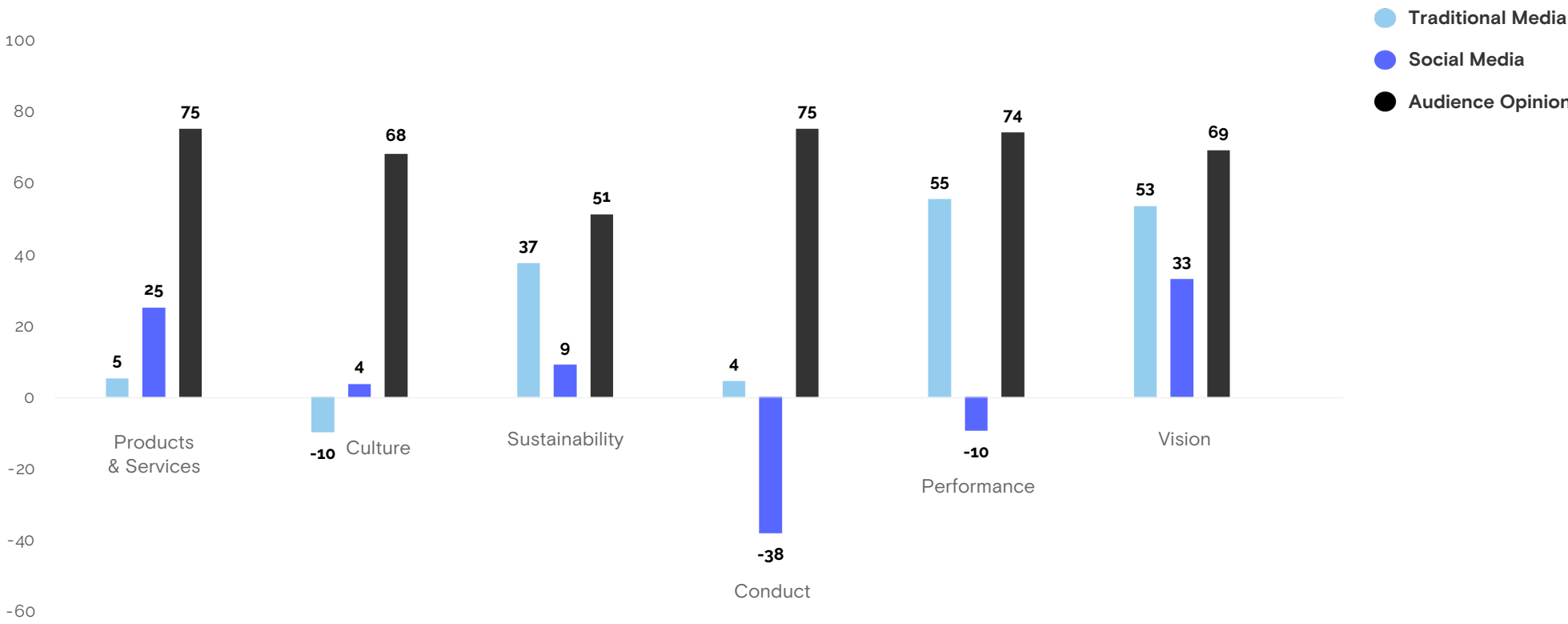
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



British Airways

Key Takeaways

High volumes of traditional media coverage on Products & Services was outweighed by the critical tone of tabloid media, which reported negative customer experiences. Social media also saw a high level of negativity for this pillar, as users took to social media to complain about customer service and experience. Despite this, Products & Services scored highest in our audience opinion research, alongside Conduct. This suggests that while the UK media and social media users might be inclined to critique and find fault, this doesn't necessarily have a substantial negative impact on reputation.

Post-Covid recovery and robust financial results fueled positive media scores for Performance and Vision. However, Performance received a negative social media score due to discussion that British Airways was facing stiff competition from Air Peace in Nigeria and reducing prices as a result.

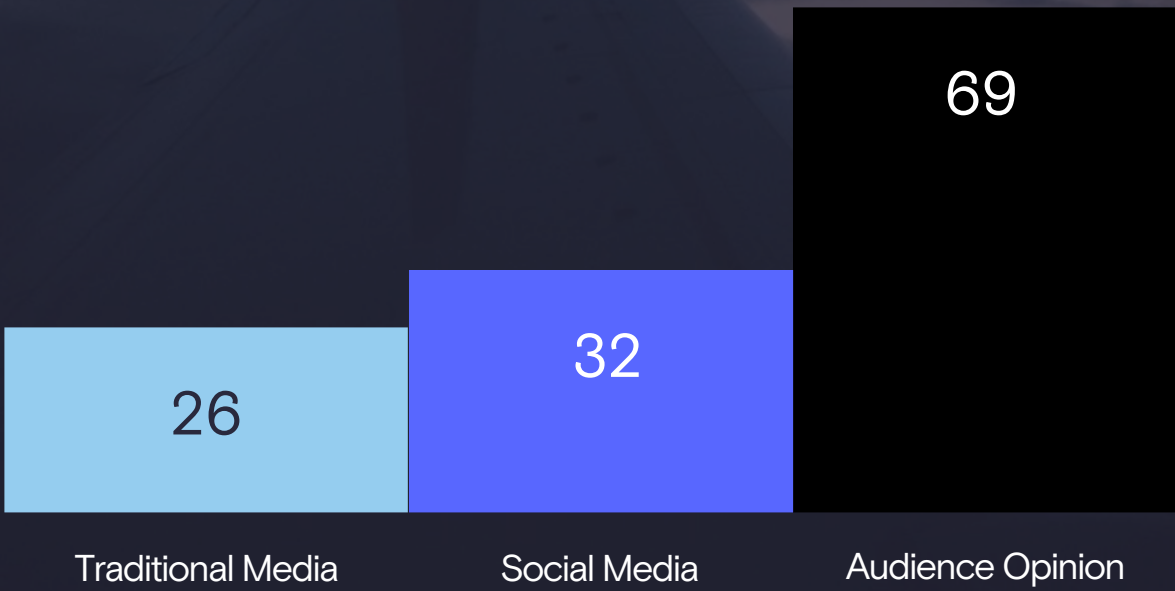
Conduct scored negatively on social media due to a range of issues, including accusations of chemtrails, discriminatory behavior, poor treatment of a disabled passenger, and criticism of the airline's previous decision to remove the UK flag from its livery (brought up in the context of the Euro 2024 England kit changing the English flag). Conduct and Culture received varying scores on traditional and social media over news that two BA cabin crew had mocked Chinese passengers. The airline's swift termination of the employees and strong statement condemning their behavior mitigated negativity, however.

Further proactive communications on topics like Conduct (the most important pillar to UK audiences) could help to further boost reputation, and 'bank' goodwill for the future.

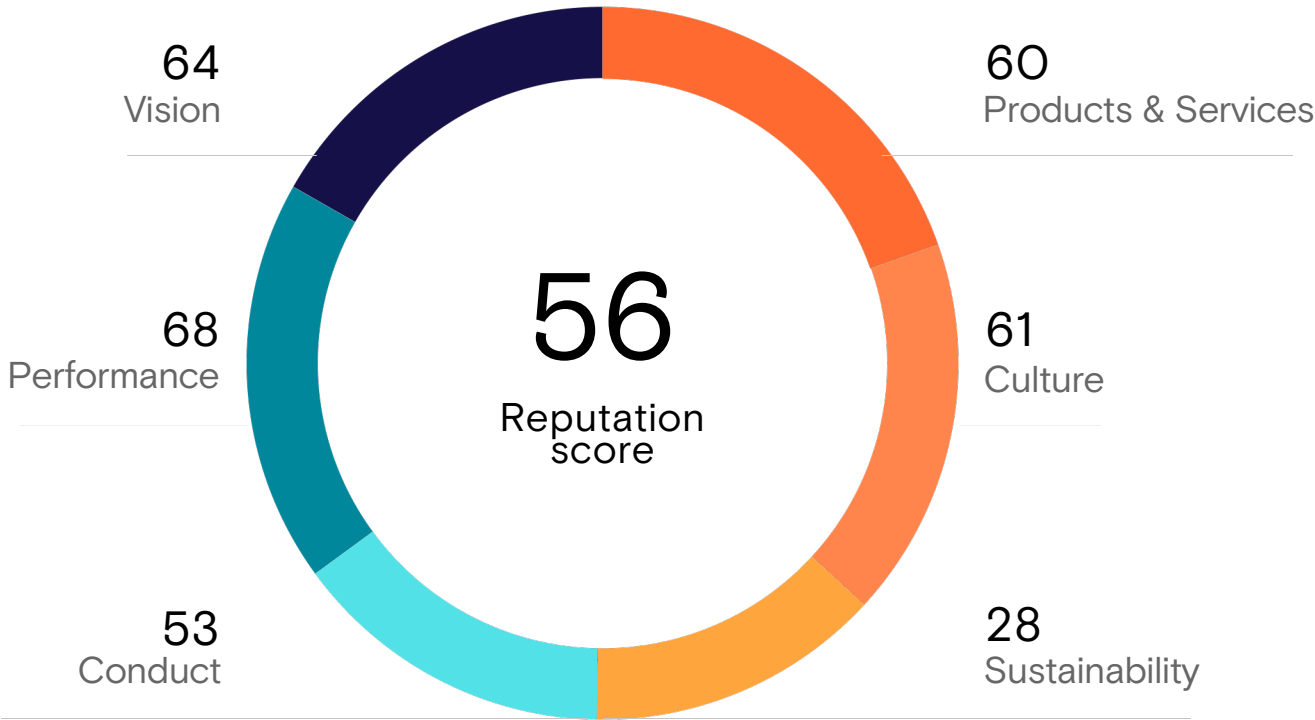
Emirates

Low media volumes, in line with low exposure response from audience research, demonstrates future opportunities to grow Emirates' reputation score.

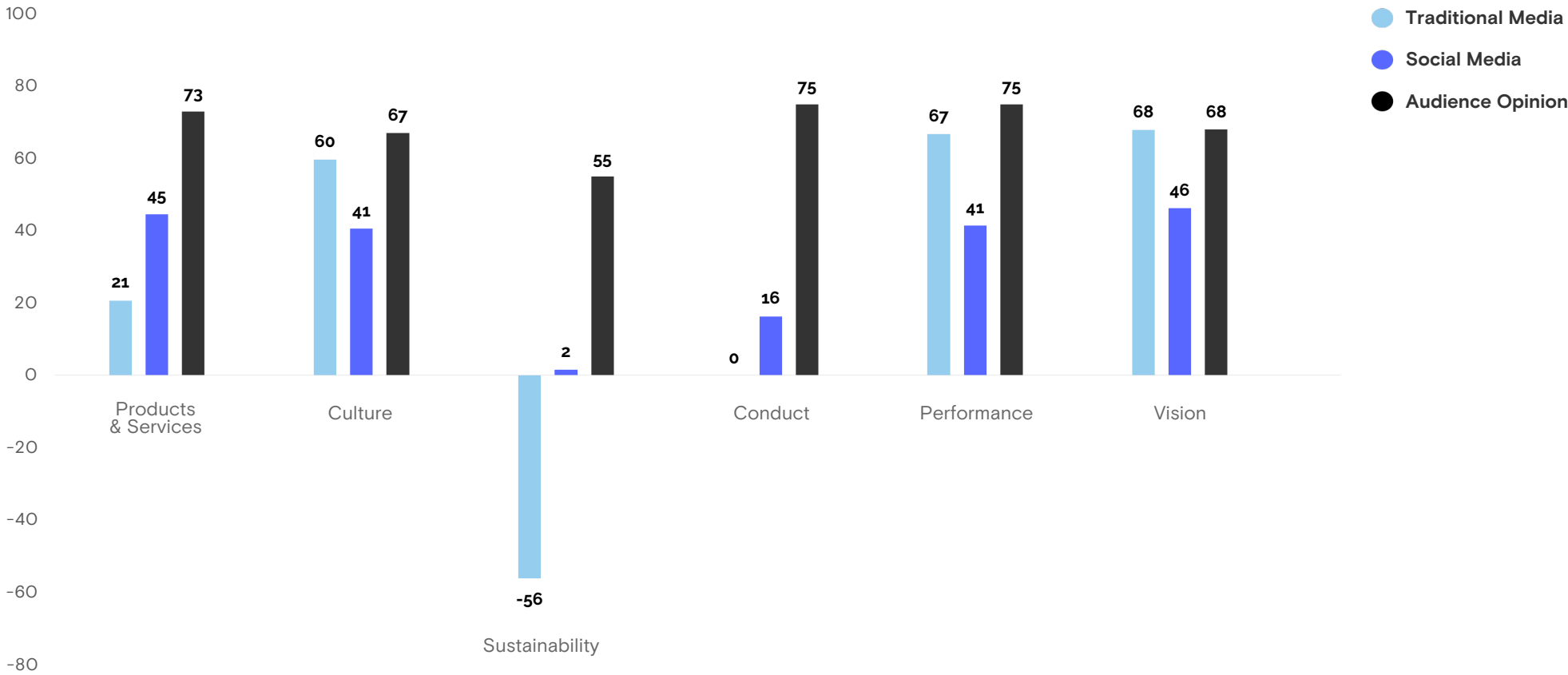
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Key Takeaways

Emirates had low volumes of traditional media coverage in the UK, with the majority (63%) of coverage being either passing mentions or equally shared with competitors – reducing the overall impact of the coverage. This was reflected in audience research, which indicated that only 37% of respondents recalled seeing any communications or marketing for Emirates.

Whilst the airline was named (amongst others) as one of Europe's most polluting airlines, driving a negative Sustainability media score, strong financial results and passenger numbers boosted its Performance and Vision scores in traditional media.

Vision and Products & Services drove social media results. Vision's score was boosted by industry awards and announcements of future strategy. However, as this is one of the pillars of lesser importance to respondents, increased focus on other areas might yield more powerful results.

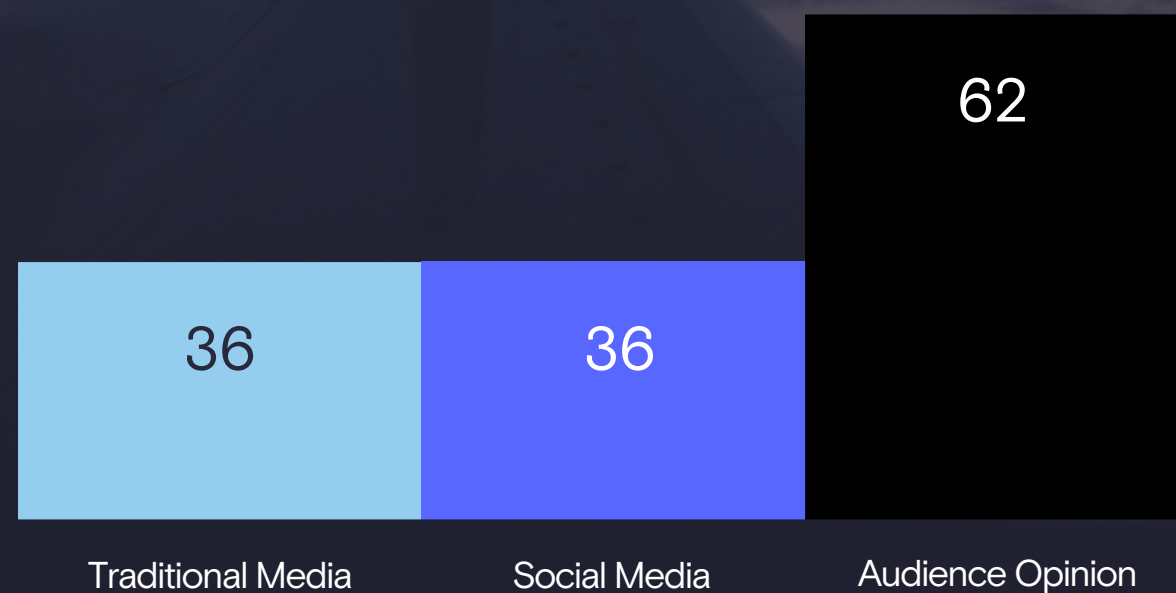
Awards led positive social Products & Services posts, whereas customer experiences and praise for the airline was relatively lacking. Collaborations with passengers and/or influencers to showcase Emirates' offering on board might boost this pillar, and the overall reputation score, further.

Despite being well known in the UK (as a sponsor of one of the biggest Premier League football clubs), proactive media coverage was limited. Proactively communicating on Products & Services, as well as issues like Sustainability, could boost reputation and understanding of the brand.

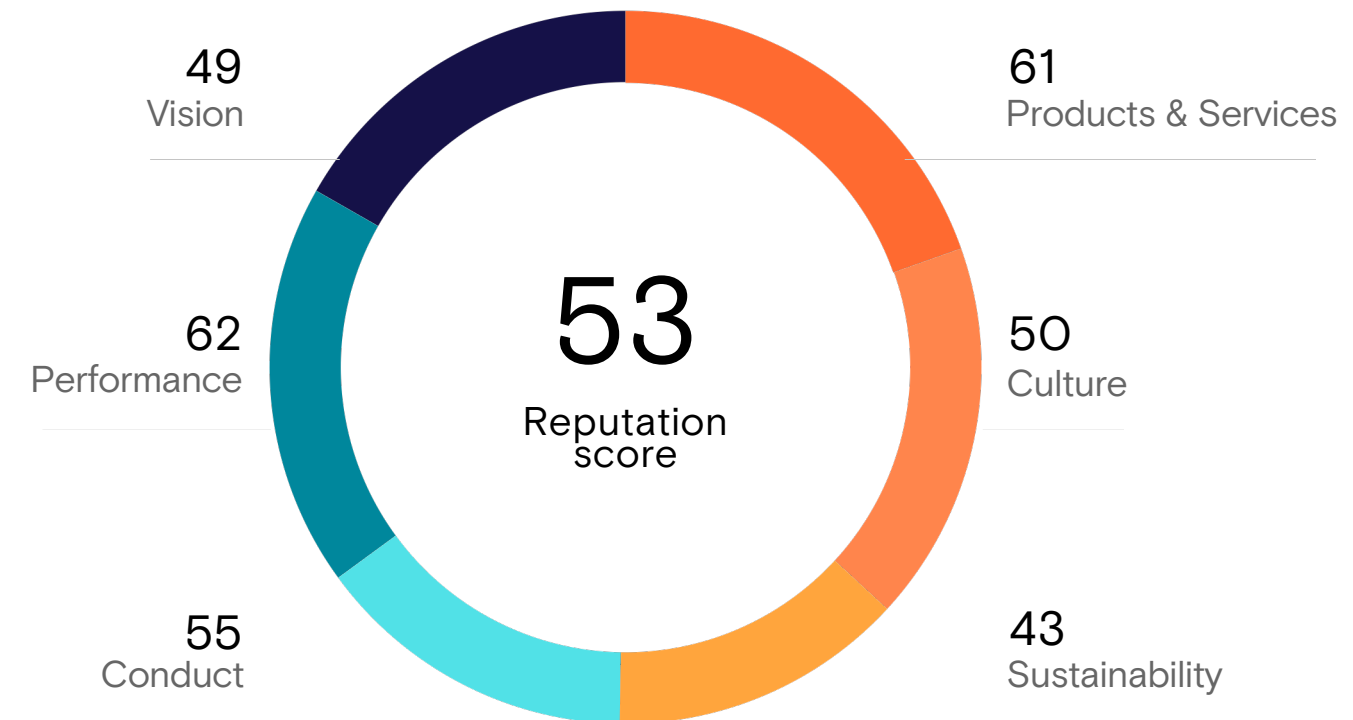
Singapore Airlines

Singapore Airlines appeared to have weathered its turbulence incident in May, and has a strong foundation for further increasing its awareness and perception amongst UK audiences.

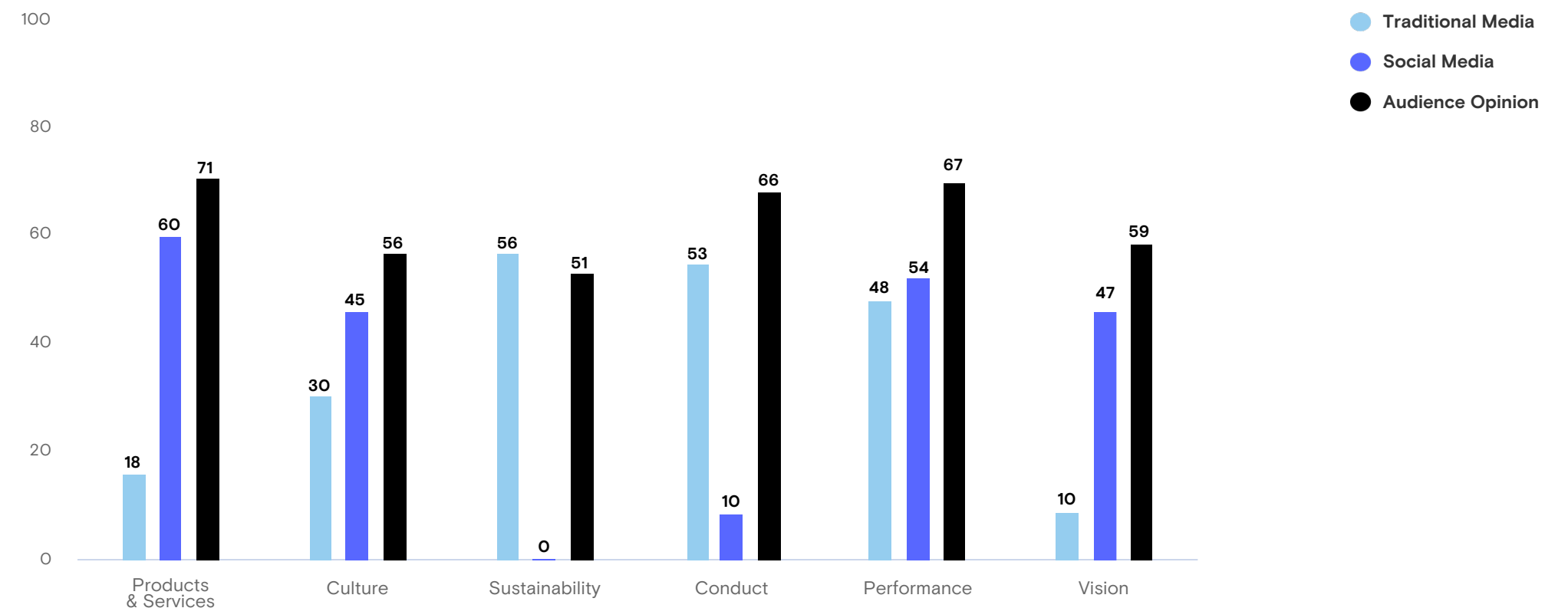
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Singapore Airlines

Key Takeaways

Unsurprisingly, most of Singapore Airlines' coverage featured the turbulence on board its flight in May which led to the death of a British passenger and injuries to several others. Coverage, under the Products & Services pillar, was mostly neutral as the turbulence was positioned as a freak event, beyond the control of the airline or its pilots. Singapore Airlines was even praised in some cases for how staff supported passengers. The incident appears not to have impacted audience opinion, which was only slightly lower than that of British Airways and Emirates, both of which are more well-known to the British public.

Whilst the turbulence incident drove some social media Products & Services content, more common topics were awards, first class cabins, and positive experiences on board (e.g. dining). There were very few customer complaints, driving up the social media component of the score.

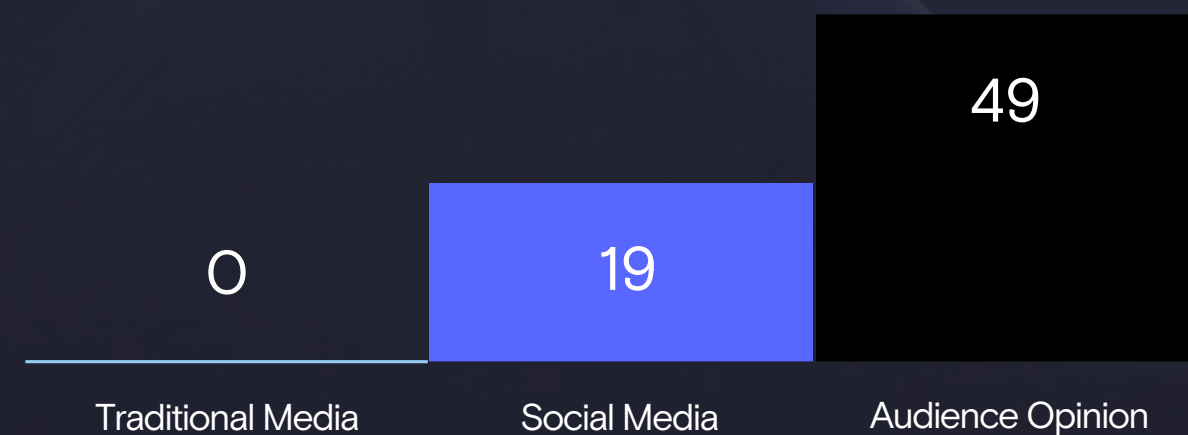
Positive financial results boosted Performance and Vision scores on both traditional and social media. News that the airline would pay its staff a generous bonus after strong results was particularly popular on social, and also enhanced the Culture score.

Audience Opinion results suggest a relatively solid foundation for further building Singapore Airlines' reputation in the UK, despite the recent turbulence incident. Increased exposure to proactive, earned communications could only serve to boost this further.

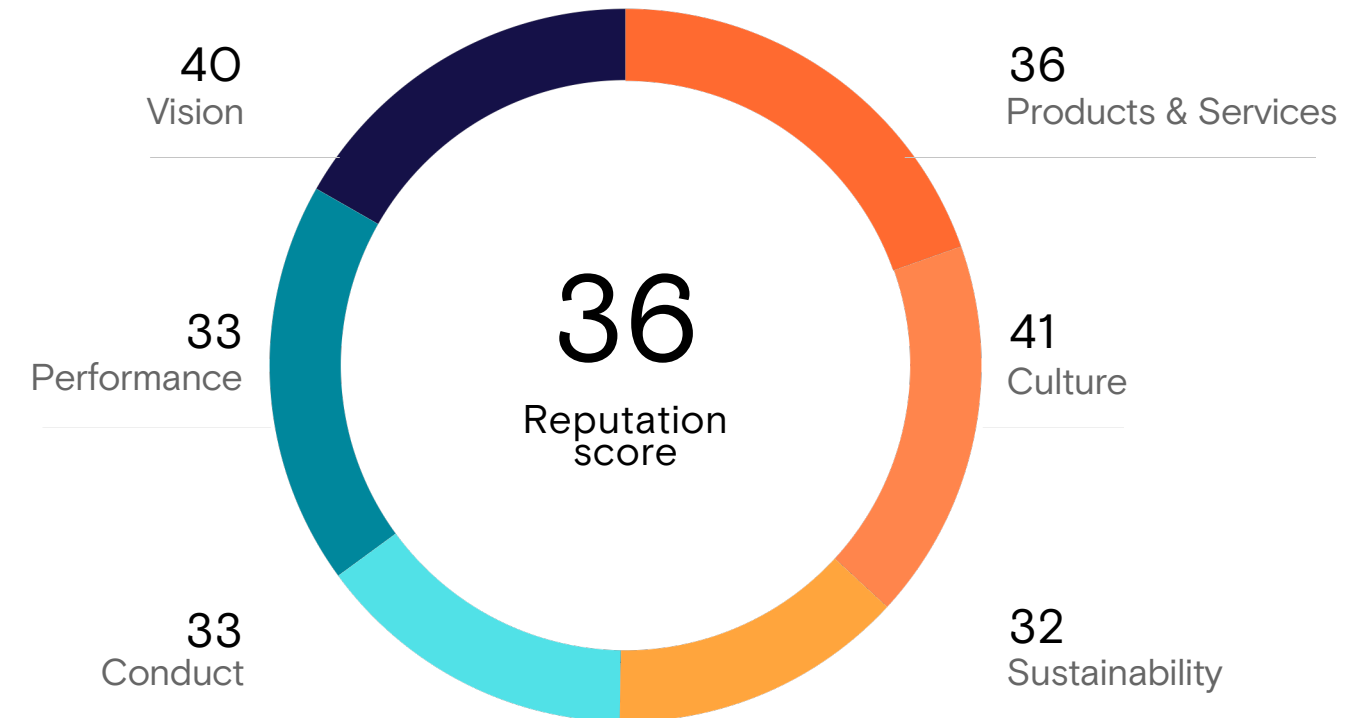
Malaysia Airlines

A dearth of media presence appears to be reflected in low audience research scores, combining to give Malaysia Airlines the lowest overall score across all airlines.

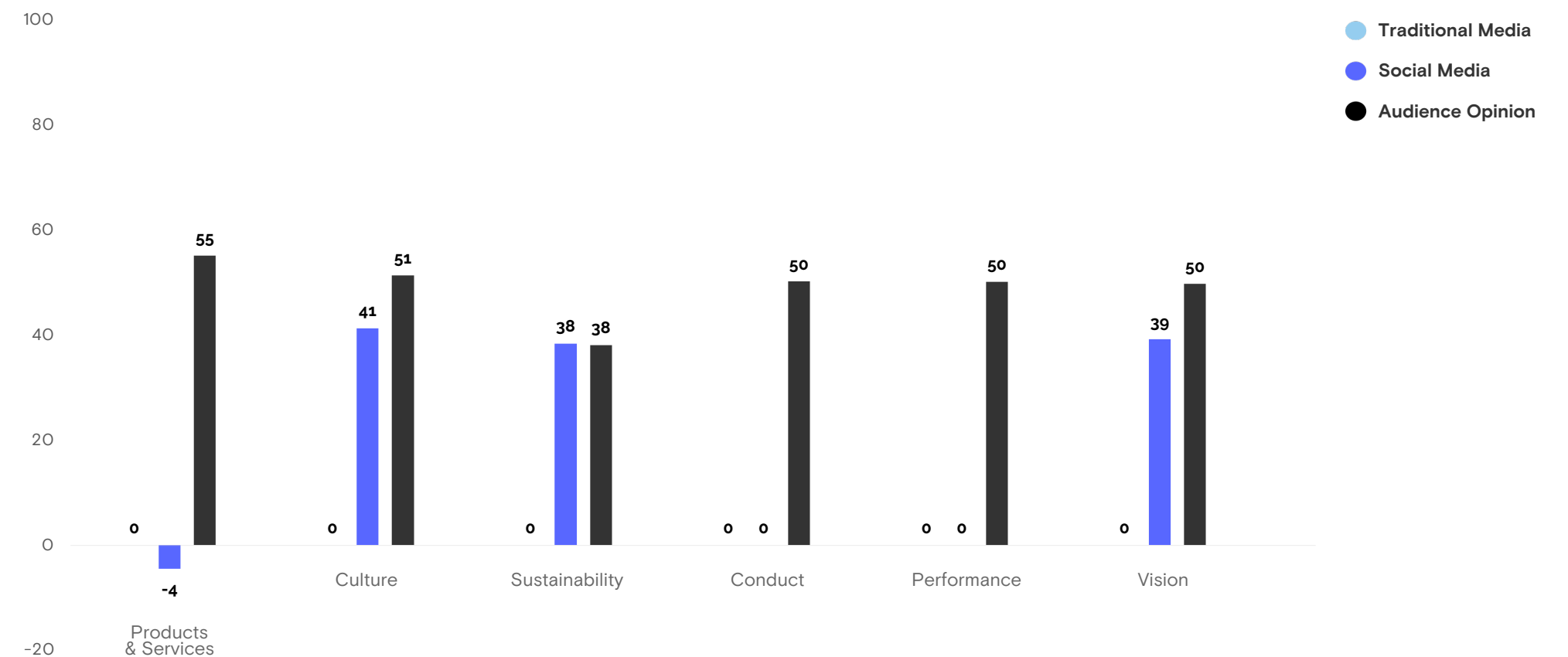
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Malaysia Airlines

Key Takeaways

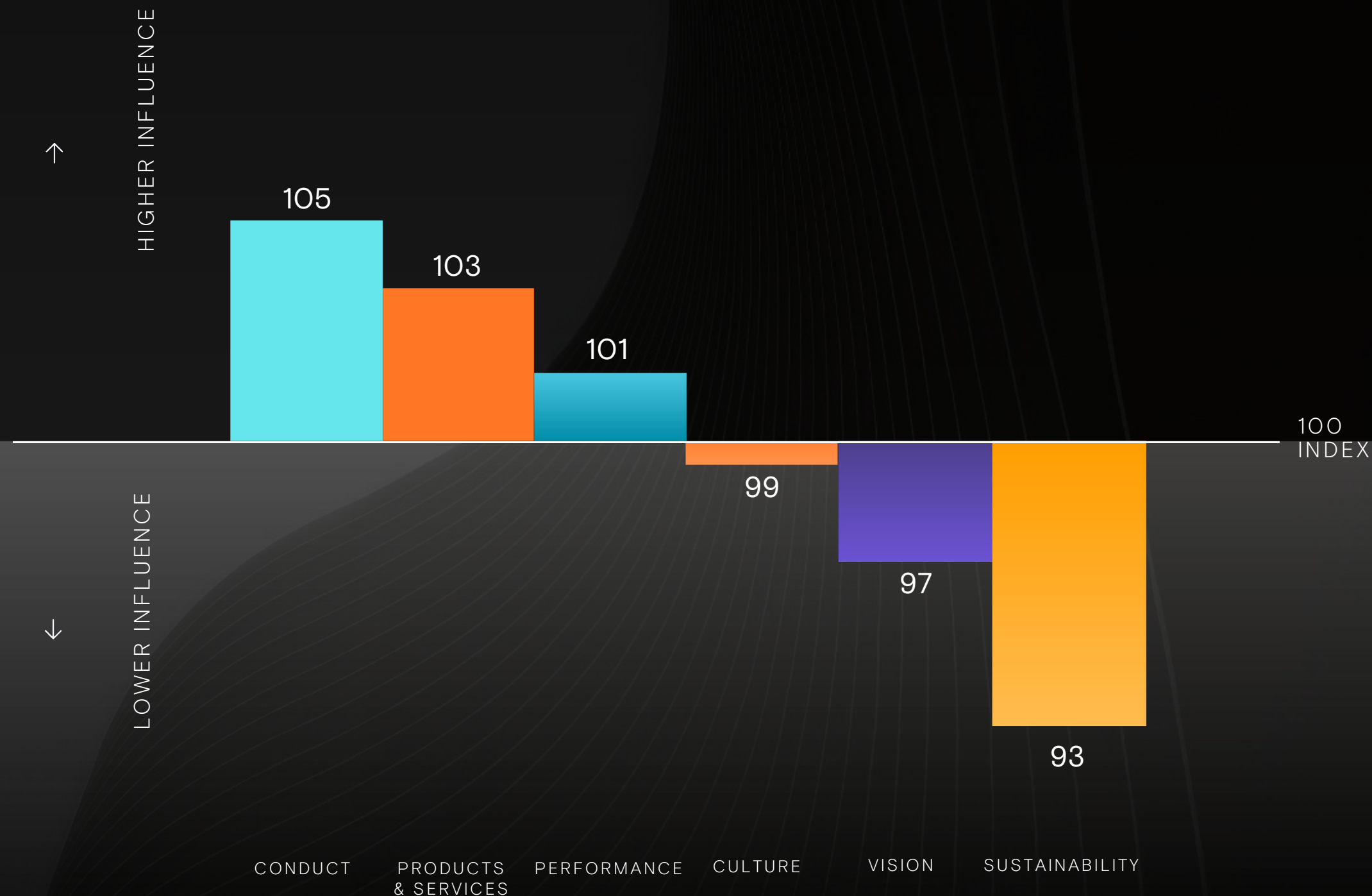
No traditional media appeared in the UK for Malaysia Airlines, and social media content was limited, vastly reducing its potential reputation score.

On social media, almost half of discussion was negative, much of which referenced the loss of flight 370 in 2014. The presence of factual mentions of the airline in posts about various airport facilities (which mentioned several airlines that use the airports in question) balanced this somewhat.

The combination of a lack of proactive communications and the lost plane remaining in public awareness contributed to one of the lowest reputation scores seen across all of the tracked airlines – despite similar levels of awareness and exposure to that of Singapore Airlines.

What actually matters

Products & Services most influential; Sustainability has the least influence on people's perception of an organization's reputation

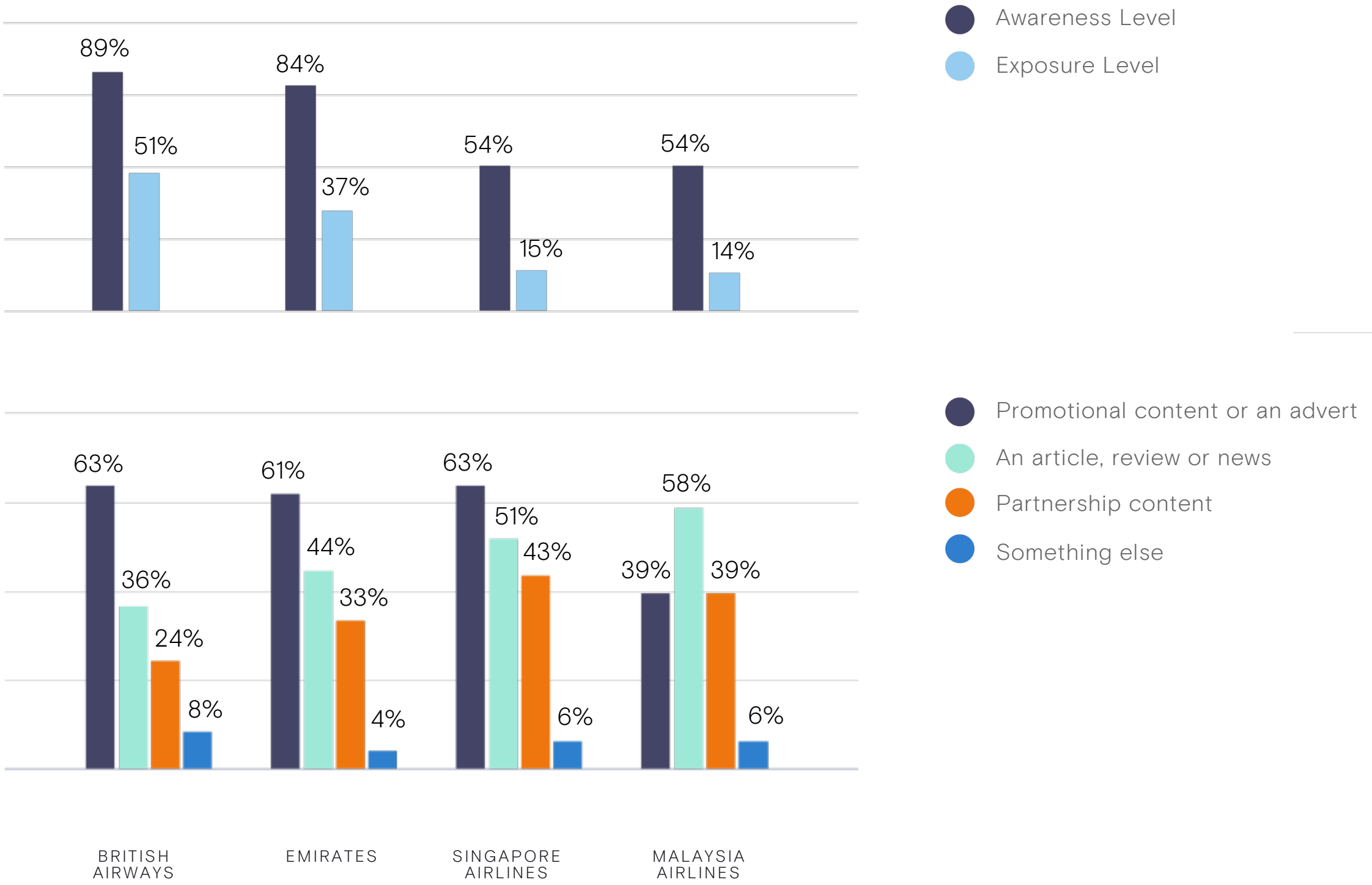


Compared to global trends, the UK values Conduct slightly more than Products & Services.

However, Sustainability and Vision are still at the bottom of the pile, in line with global results.

Awareness and exposure

Exposure levels broadly in line with media coverage results, with the exception of Malaysia Airlines which did not receive any traditional media coverage in the tracked titles during the research period.



Awareness level: represents the percentage of people who have heard and know something or heard and know a lot about the airline.

Exposure level: represents the percentage of people who have heard or seen something about this airline.

British Airways has the highest awareness and exposure levels, likely due to its status in the UK as a national carrier.

Emirates also showed high awareness levels, but limited exposure; meaning that people are very familiar with the brand but do not have frequent exposure to related news.

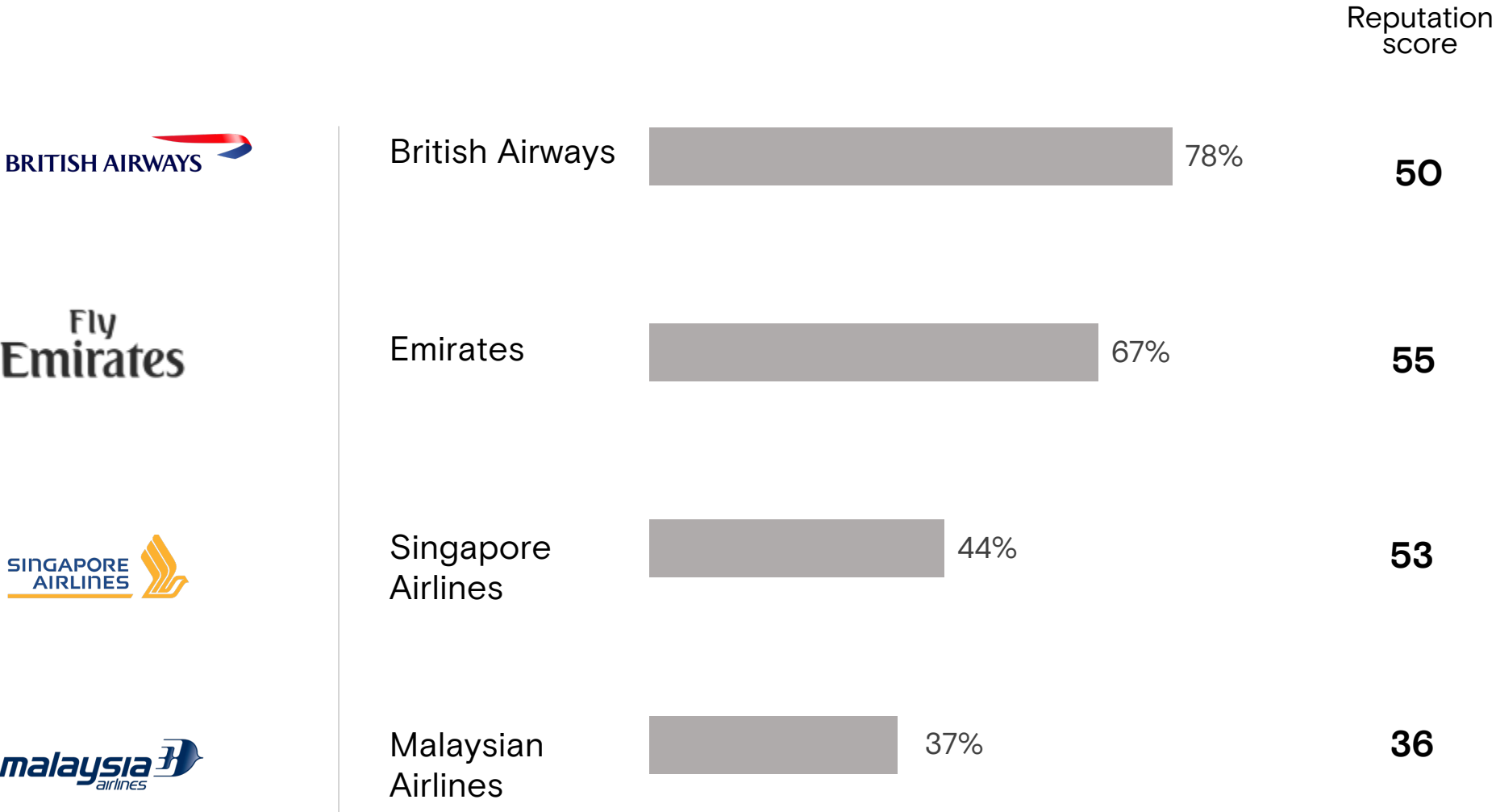
Singapore Airlines and Malaysian Airlines showed lower awareness and exposure levels; possibly due to fewer direct flights to the UK and/or limited marketing and communication efforts.

Promotional content has the highest consumption across all airlines except for Malaysia Airlines where people are more likely to consume reviews and news articles. This is an interesting contrast to the lack of traditional media coverage during this reporting period for Malaysia Airlines.

British Airways’ promotional content is consumed twice as much as reviews or news articles, a gap not seen in other airlines.

Usage Likelihood

British Airways is leading followed by Emirates, despite its low reputation score, indicating that there is a distinction between people’s perceptions and people’s purchasing decisions



- Over three quarters of respondents reported that they were likely to use British Airways’ products and/or services.
- By contrast, only a third of respondents reported that they were likely to use Malaysia Airlines’ products and/or services. This could be partially explained by the low exposure and awareness levels of the airline.
- Despite scoring the lowest on reputation score, British Airways scored the highest in terms of likelihood of usage, suggesting the need for better exposure and knowledge of British Airways’ products and services.



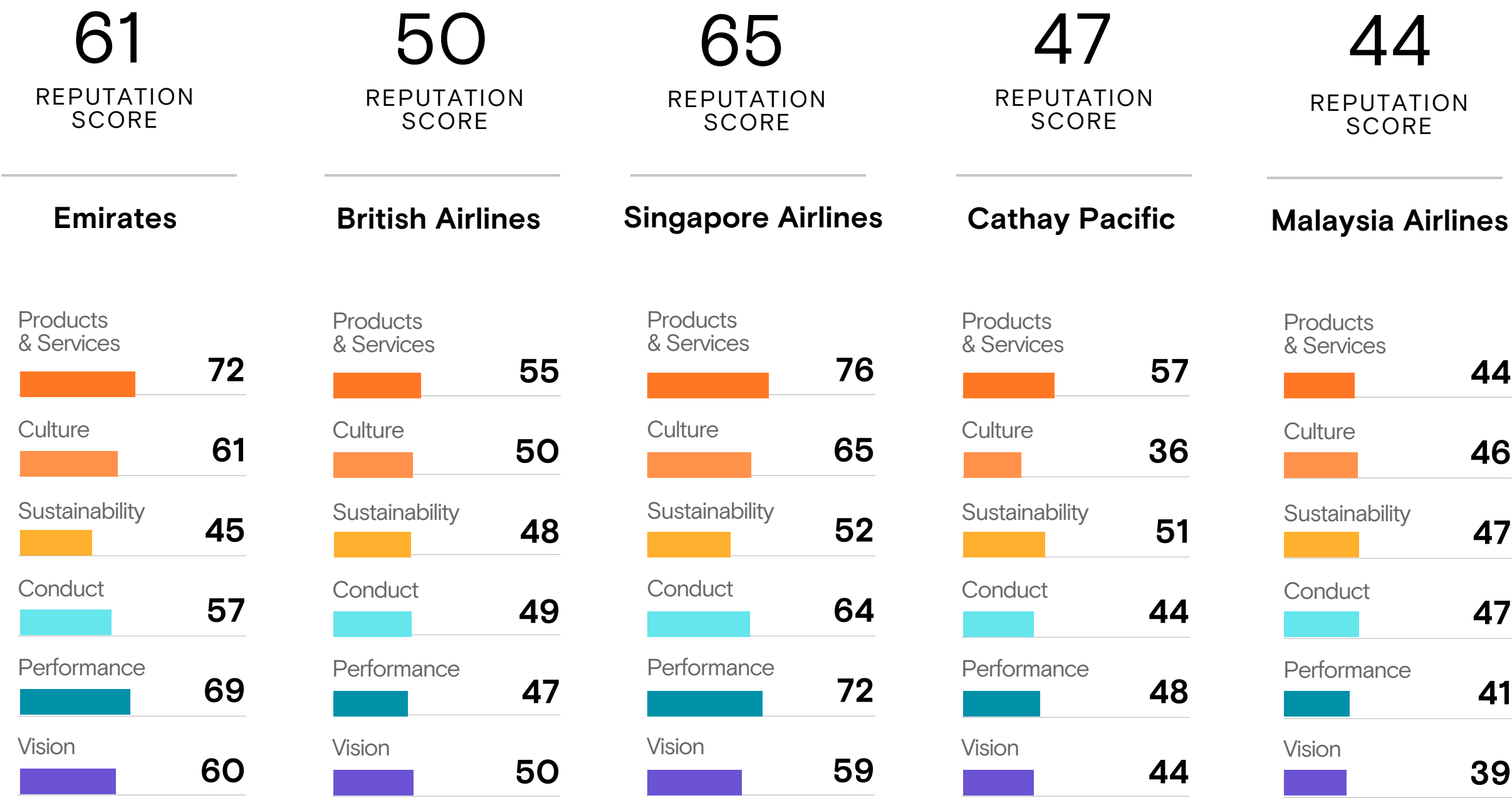
A photograph of an airplane wing flying over a sea of clouds at sunset or sunrise. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, and the clouds are illuminated from below, creating a dramatic, layered effect. The wing is dark and sleek, extending from the bottom right towards the center of the frame.

ASIA: Emirates, British Airways, Malaysia Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific

Airlines Reputation Trends

Singapore Airlines stood out above all others with positive results across all pillars and sources.

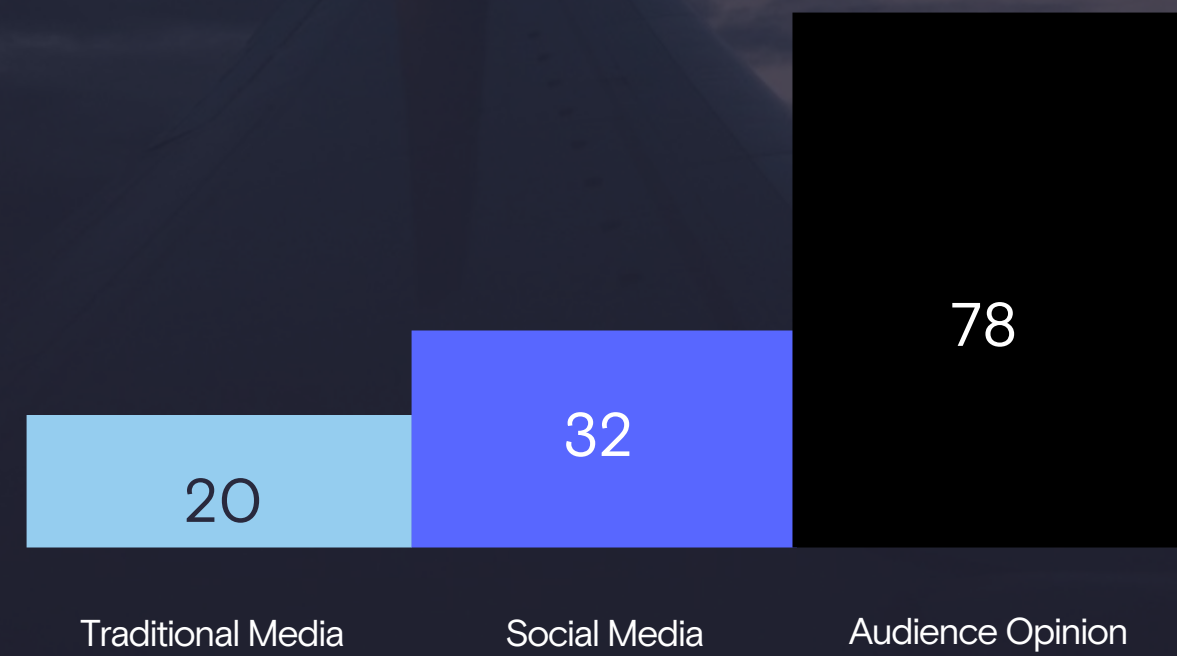
Singapore Airlines saw the most consistent performance across all areas of the reputation score in Asia, with the highest results both overall and in each of the three sources (traditional media, social media and audience research). Despite the massive volume of reporting on the turbulence incident which resulted in the death of a passenger, the airline was not seen as culpable, and impact on audience perception seems to have been negligible, as Products & Services – which includes passenger safety – was the highest rated pillar by audiences (with an audience score of 90).



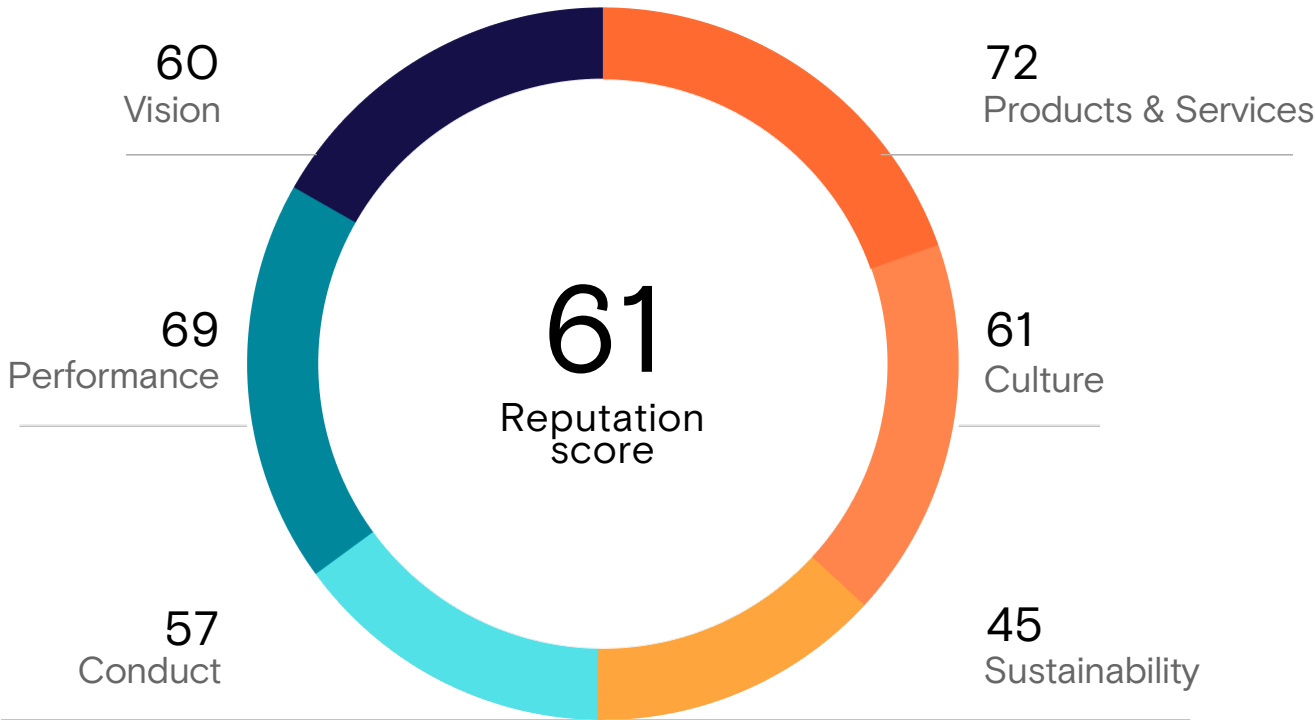
Emirates

Strong audience opinion scores, particularly for Products & Services and Performance, were somewhat downweighed by low media visibility.

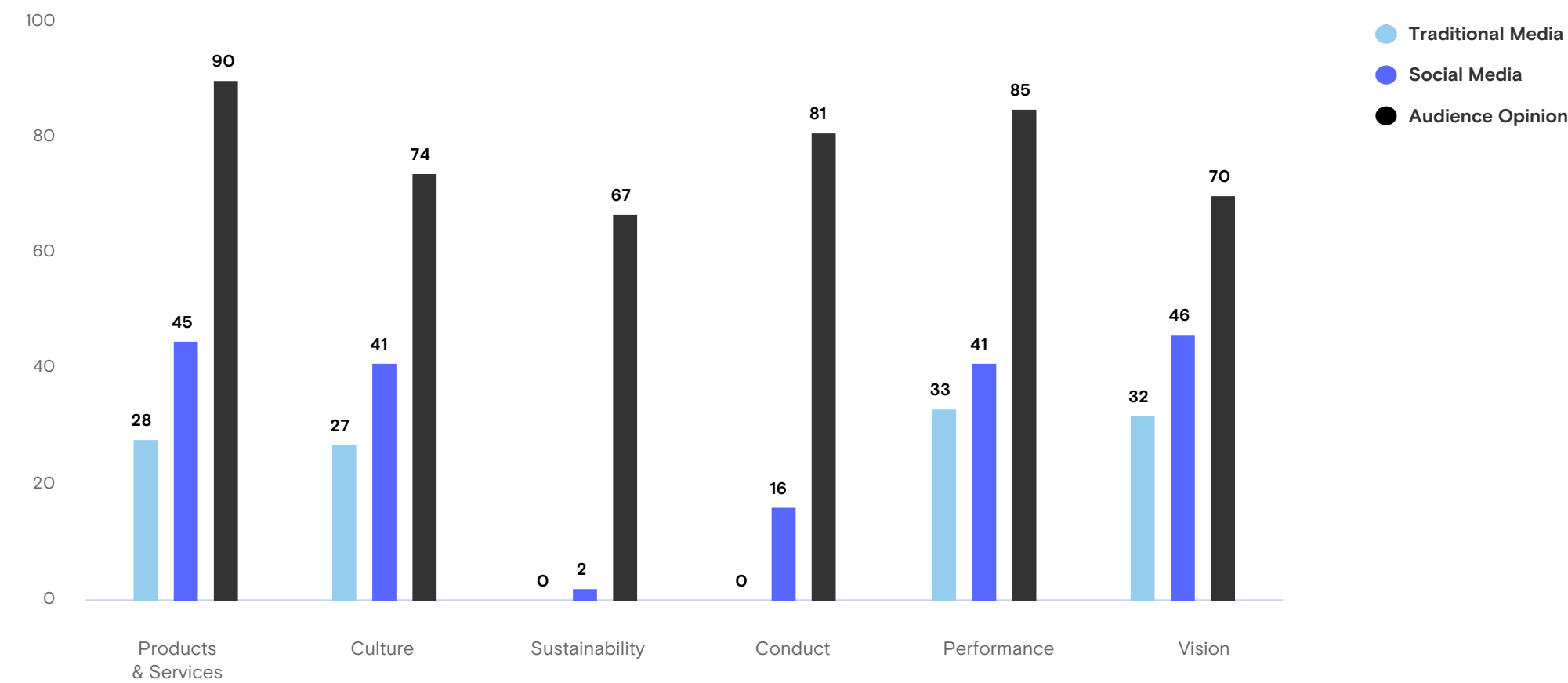
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Emirates

Key Takeaways

Emirates' traditional media coverage in Asia was mostly neutral (66%), and either passing or competitor-driven mentions (70%). As a result, traditional media scores were comparatively low, and there was no coverage featuring Sustainability or Conduct. Overall audience sentiment was similarly low (a net figure of 58% across respondents in tracked Asian markets), suggesting a potential link between low media presence and audience response.

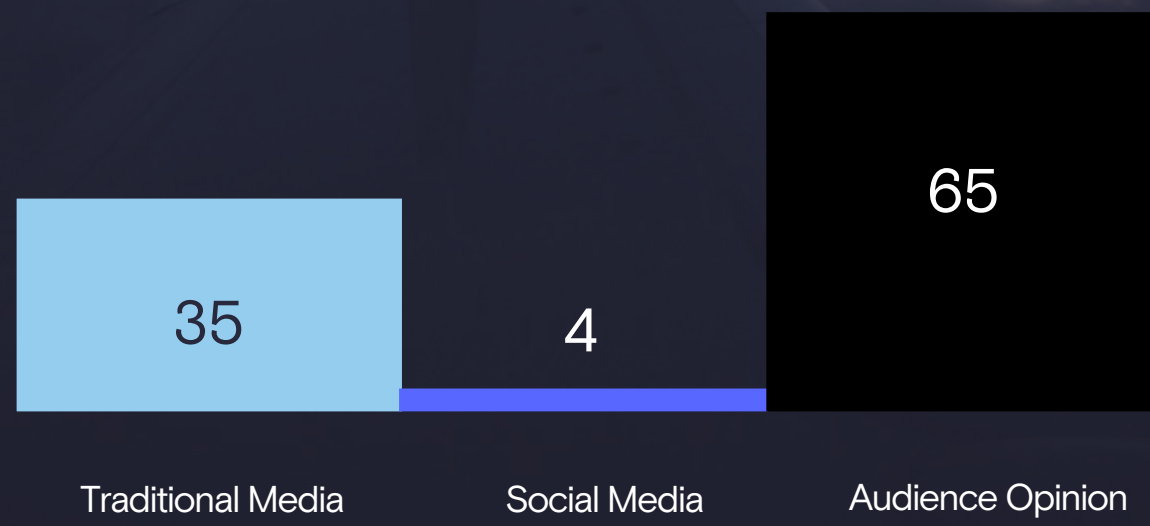
Social media scores were led by Vision and Products & Services. The former was boosted by awards and strategy conversation. Awards also contributed to Products & Services social media coverage. This pillar lacked first person stories from passengers, which may have boosted its results further. However the extremely high audience opinion for Products & Services made up for this, and contributed to make this the most highly scoring pillar for Emirates.

Despite neutral and factual media, Emirates scored well with audiences. This could indicate a strong reputational foundation and an appetite amongst audiences to know more.

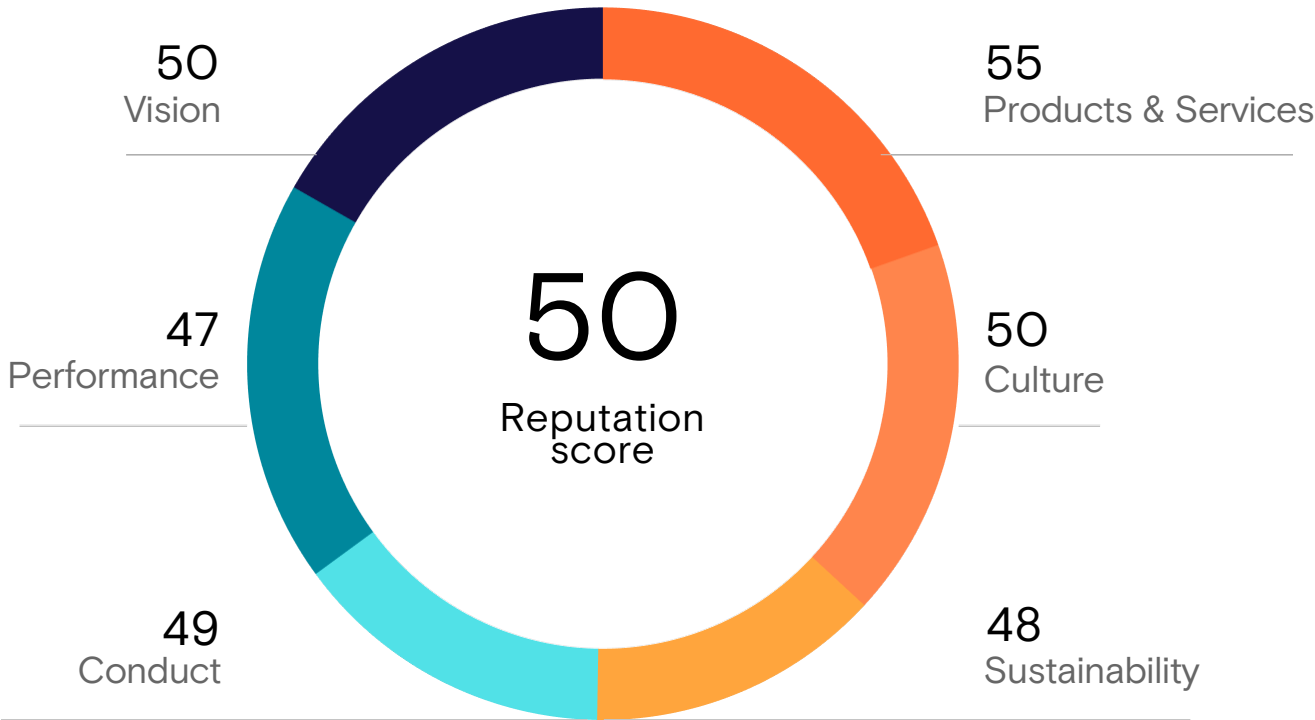
British Airways

Relatively low media visibility was reflected in audience awareness and exposure, and potentially contributed to middling audience opinion results.

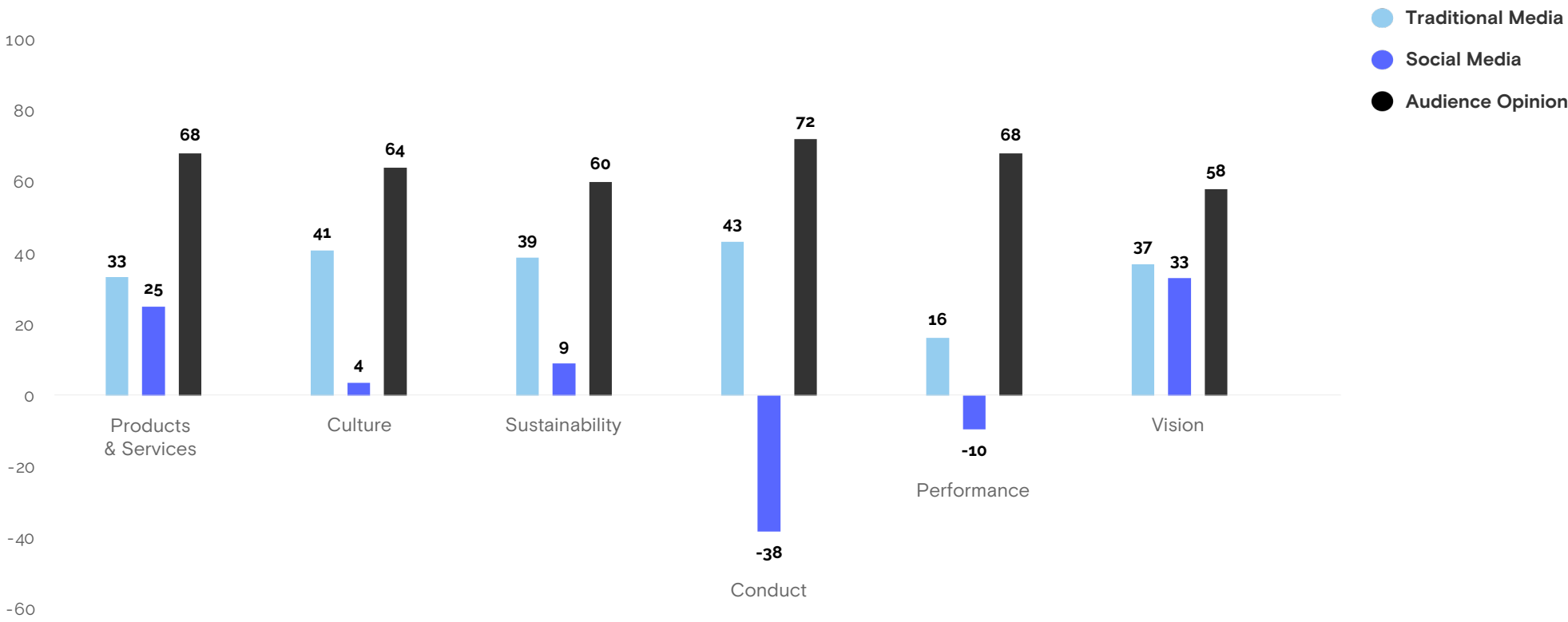
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



British Airways

Key Takeaways

World's safest airlines rankings featuring British Airways generated the majority of Products & Services traditional media coverage, but as the tone was neutral (due to BA appearing in the bottom half of articles and being mentioned only once), the Products & Services score was lower than it might have been. Positive financial results for British Airways' owner IAG boosted Performance, but concerns that Google changes may negatively impact airlines, hotels and restaurants drove down that pillar's score.

A controversial story about British Airways cabin crew mocking Chinese passengers generated coverage for the Culture, Sustainability and Conduct pillars. Although the cabin crew's behavior was reported extremely negatively, articles noted that they had been fired and condemned by BA and featured social media comments praising the airline for their prompt response to the incident.

References to controversies including discrimination and a historical branding issue drove the negative social media score for Conduct, while negativity for Performance was down to perceived challenges with BA's market share in Nigeria.

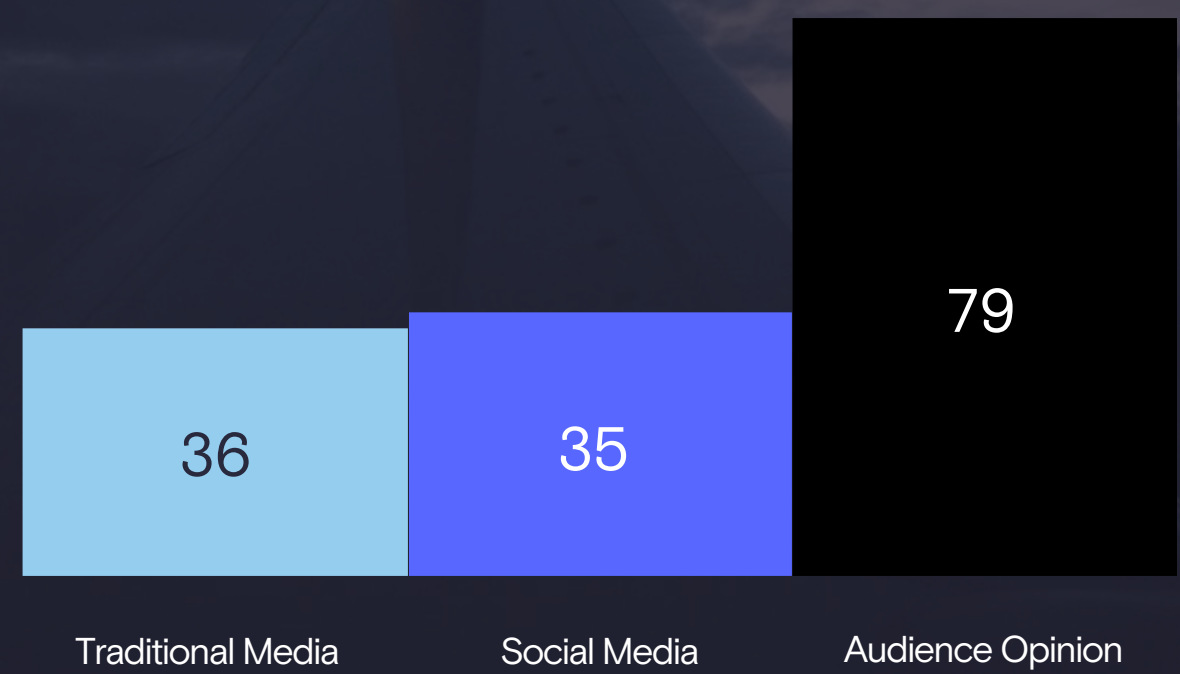
Positive conversation on awards and branding boosted Vision to the highest pillar score within social media, although Products & Services received the highest volume of coverage. However, its score remained relatively low due to a significant number of customer complaints.

Audience awareness and exposure rates for British Airways were low (57% and 15% respectively), perhaps reflecting the relatively low levels of media coverage.

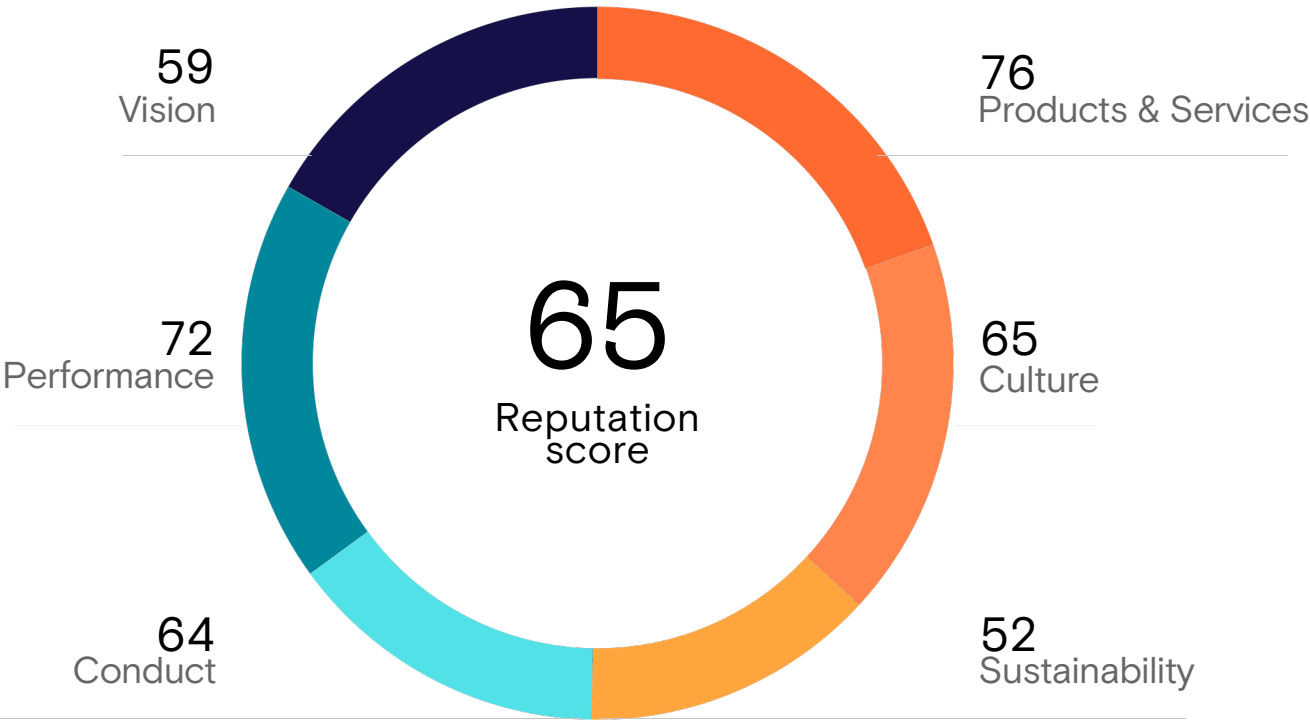
Singapore Airlines

Despite suffering a widely reported incident which involved a passenger death, Singapore Airlines emerged as the brand with the best reputation amongst the study's Asian markets.

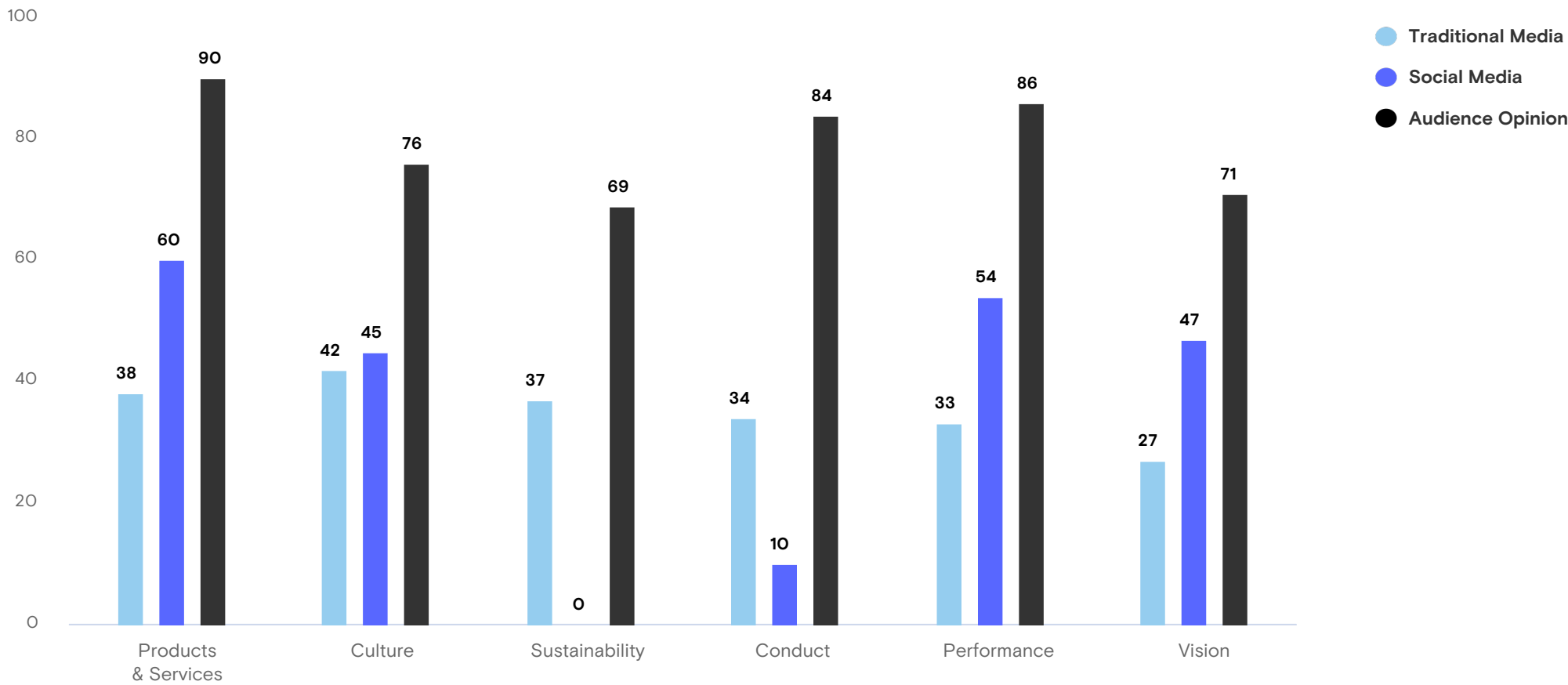
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Singapore Airlines

Key Takeaways

Singapore Airlines flight 321 from London to Singapore, which encountered severe turbulence and resulted in the death of one passenger and the injuries of several more, was unsurprisingly the main driver of traditional media coverage. The majority of reporting was neutral, assigning no blame to the airline or its pilots. Some pieces praised the response of staff and the airline's efforts to keep passengers and families informed. As a result, there was no overtly negative impact on media reputation scores despite the huge volume of reporting on the matter. This is also reflected in the strong audience opinion results – the strongest of all tracked airlines in the study's Asian markets.

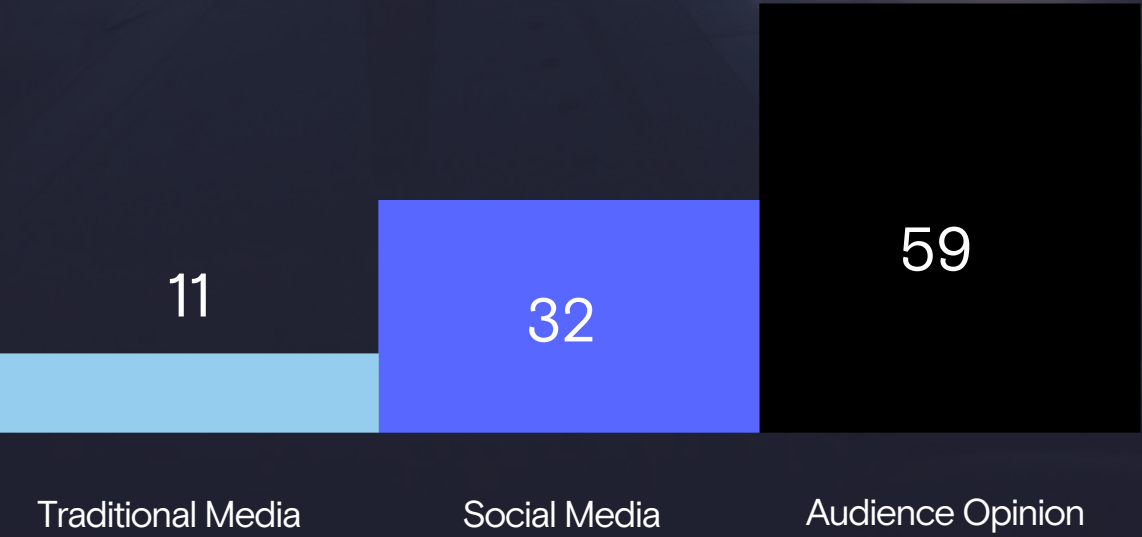
Whilst the turbulence incident did appear on social media, engagements with it were limited, and it was therefore outweighed by more positive and proactive social media content. Posts showing off the luxury available on first class options on Singapore were a particularly successful driver of Products & Services scores on social media, as were awards and top airlines rankings, where Singapore featured highly in a range of service areas.

Culture, Performance and Vision were boosted by the news that the airline was rewarding staff with a bonus of 8 months of salary after strong financial results. Many users commended the company for showing gratitude and recognition to its staff in this way, and calling it an example for other large organizations to follow.

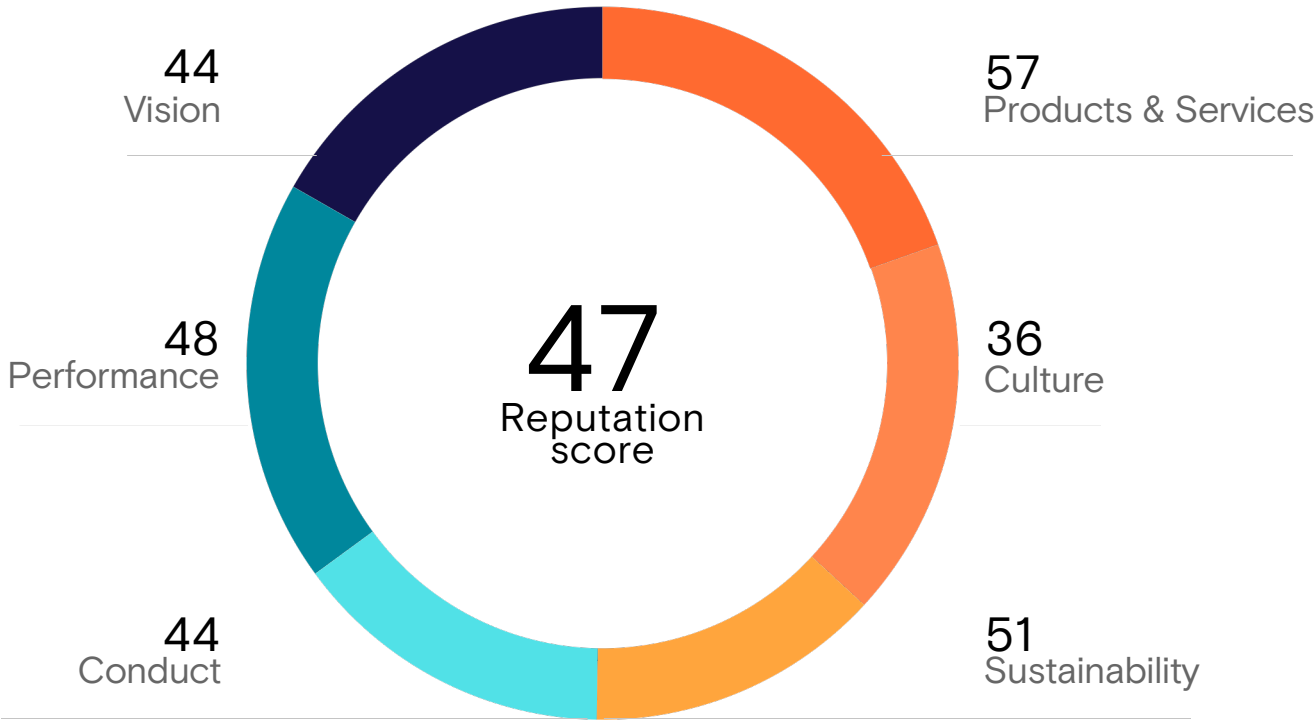
Cathay Pacific

A mixed set of results for Cathay Pacific, beset by significant challenges in the first quarter of the year, resulted in the second lowest score across Asia.

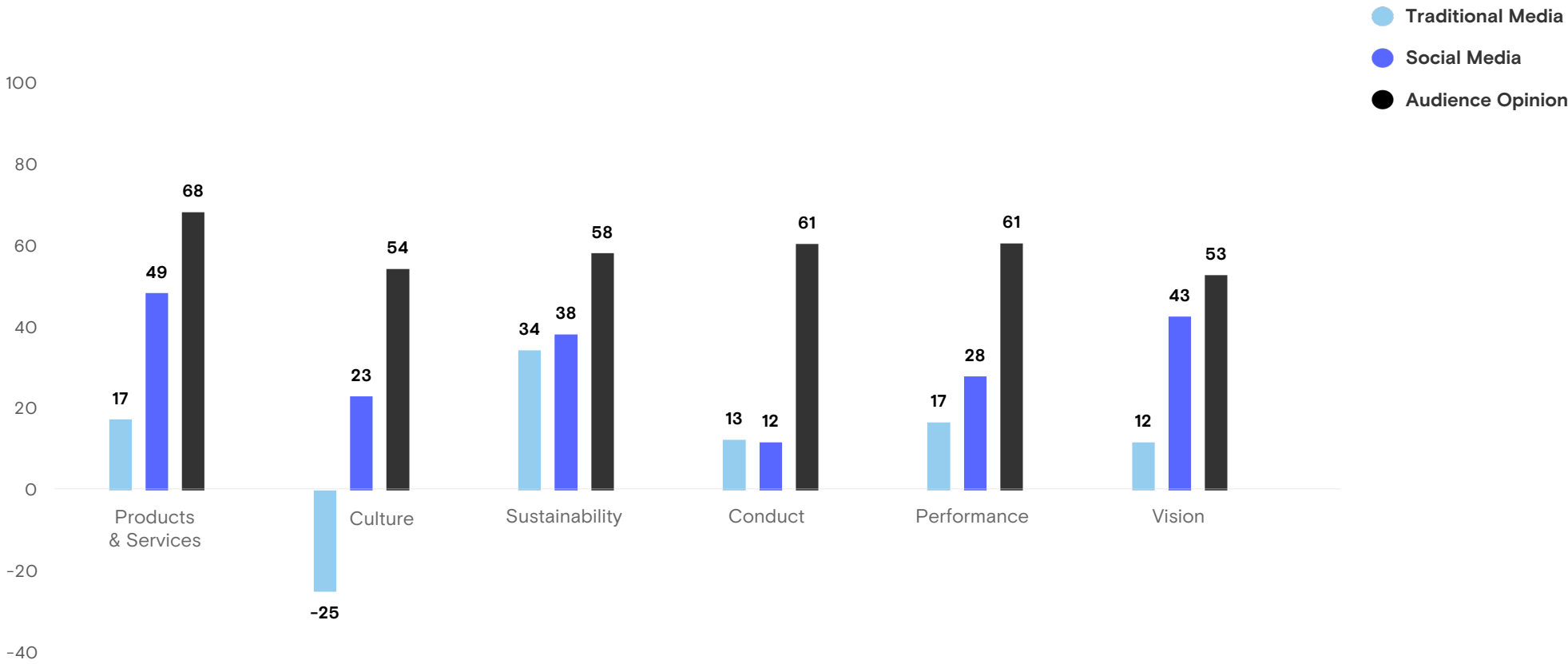
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Cathay Pacific

Key Takeaways

Several stories led to Cathay Pacific being the most frequently reported on airline in Asia across the tracked markets and titles. A Korean Air plane collided with a Cathay Pacific aircraft whilst on the tarmac at Hokkaido's New Chitose airport, although the plane was parked and no passengers were on board. There were also a string of cancellations of Cathay Pacific flights in January, due to staff shortages, which generated substantial criticism of the company and led to over a third of coverage being negative in tone (37%).

The latter story in particular led to a negative traditional media score for Culture, as the company was accused of reducing headcount too much during Covid and was criticized by unions for its staffing policy.

Best airline rankings, where Cathay placed third, boosted the Products & Services, Performance and Vision scores, along with news of the airline's first return to profit in four years.

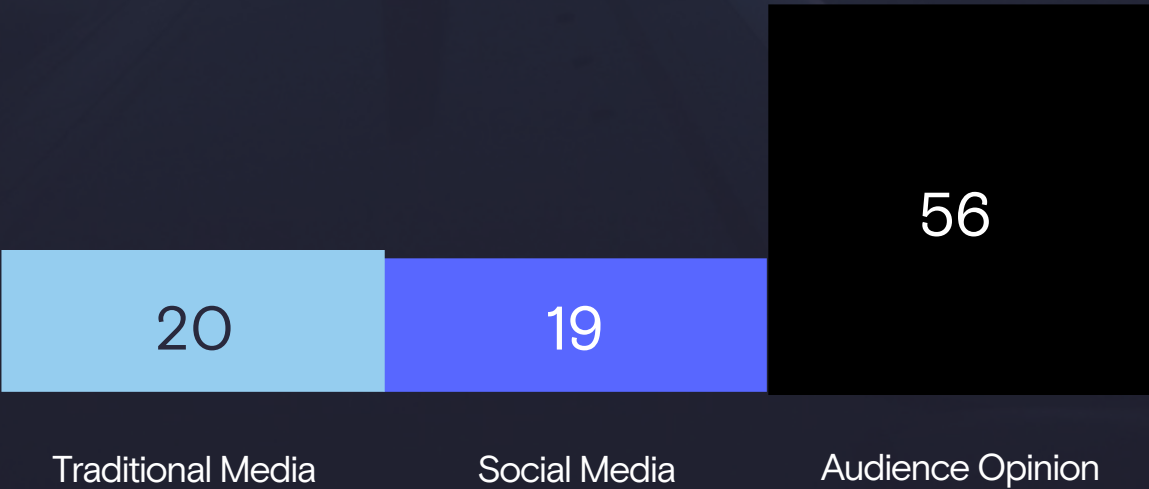
Positive and neutral discussion far outweighed negative on social media, however, boosted by industry awards, showcasing new premium economy offerings, and praise from customers.

These mixed results in media were reflected somewhat in audience opinion scores, which were significantly lower than several other airlines. This indicates that Cathay Pacific may need to further engage audiences through authentic, proactive communications reassuring potential customers of the stability and forward planning of the organization, as well as showcasing its luxury offerings.

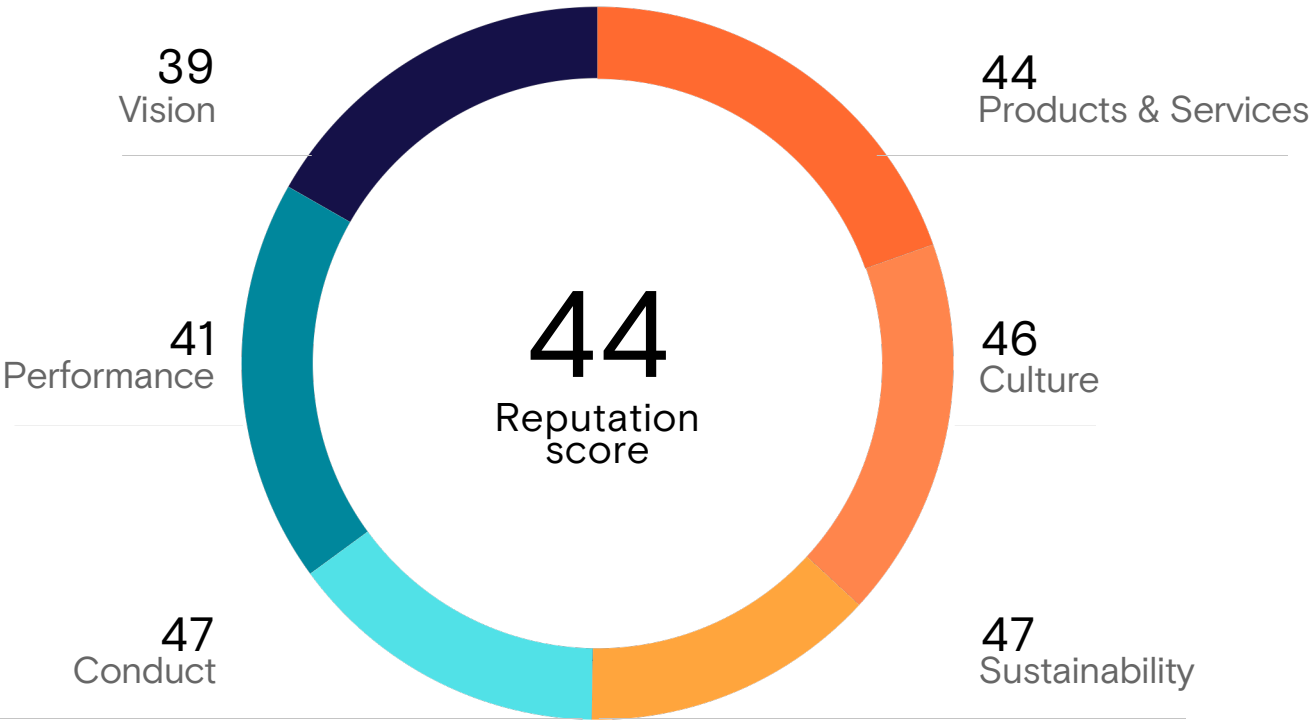
Malaysia Airlines

In stark contrast to Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines received the lowest score in Asia, due to a dearth of proactive communications and still suffering from association with the loss of flight 370 10 years ago.

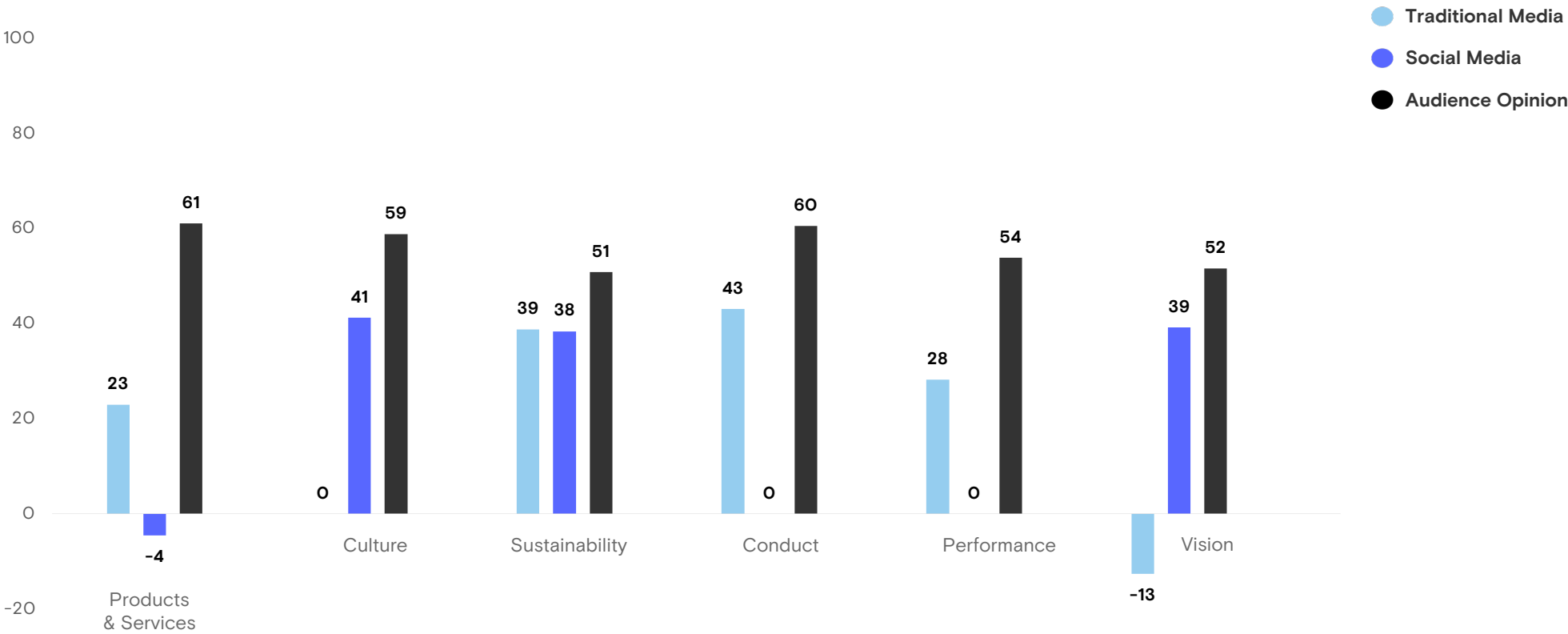
Score by Source



Overall Score



Pillar Score by Source



Malaysia Airlines

Key Takeaways

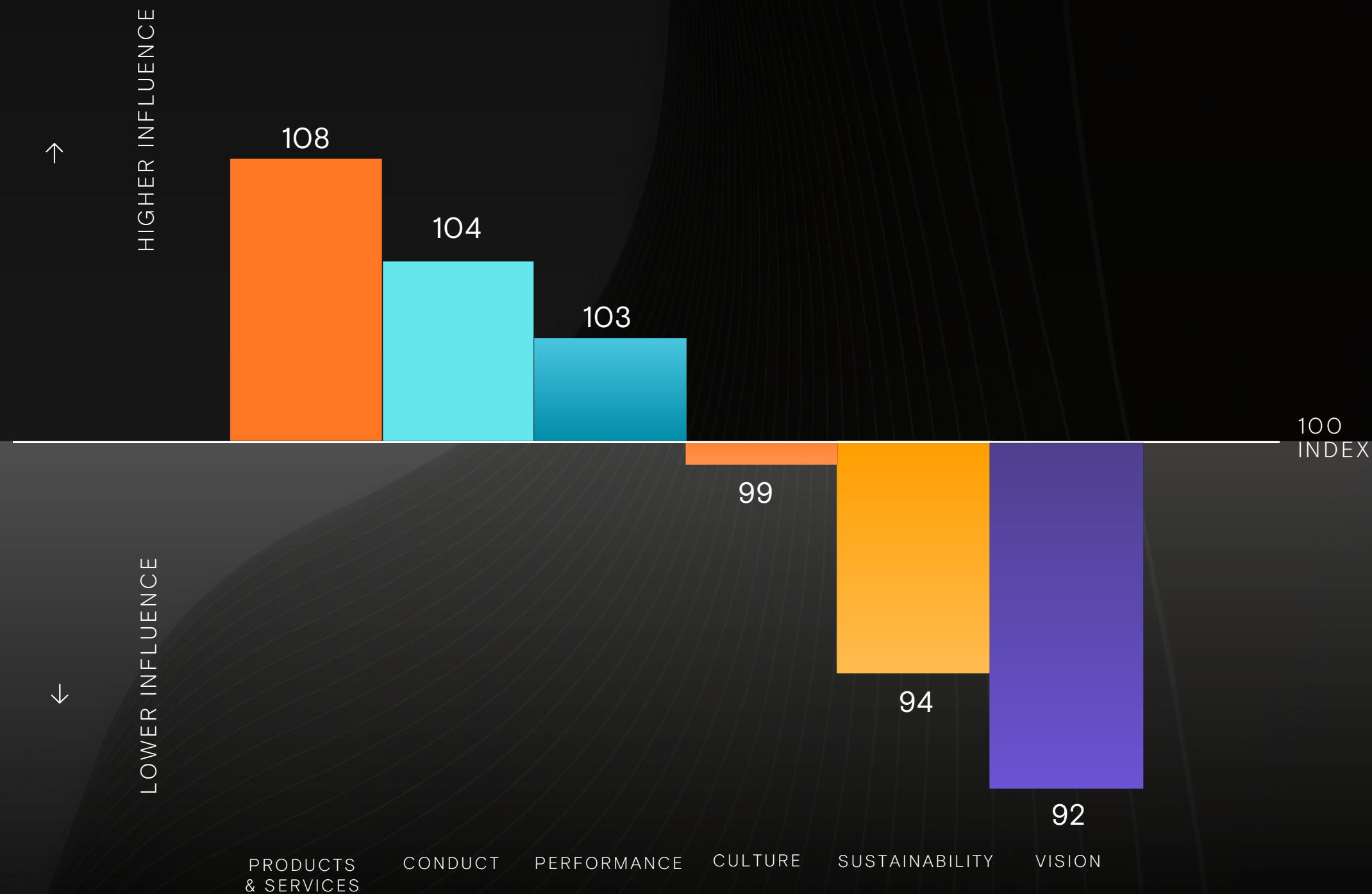
Malaysia Airlines was notable for its low volume of both traditional and social media content, with seemingly little proactive communication. Negative coverage for Vision in traditional media, driving a poor score for that pillar, was focused on comments made by Malaysia Aviation Group managing director Izham Ismail that the decline of MAS was caused by the Malaysian and Singapore governments' decision to split Malaysia-Singapore Airlines into two.

On social media, almost half of coverage was negative, much of which referenced the loss of flight 370 in 2014. The presence of factual mentions of the airline in posts about various airport facilities (which mentioned several airlines that use the airports in question) balanced this somewhat.

The combination of a lack of proactive communications, and the lost plane remaining in public awareness contributed to one of the lowest reputation scores seen across all of the tracked airlines – despite having the highest awareness score of tracked airlines in Asia at 84% of respondents being aware of Malaysia Airlines, the company received the lowest Audience Opinion score, of 56.

What actually matters

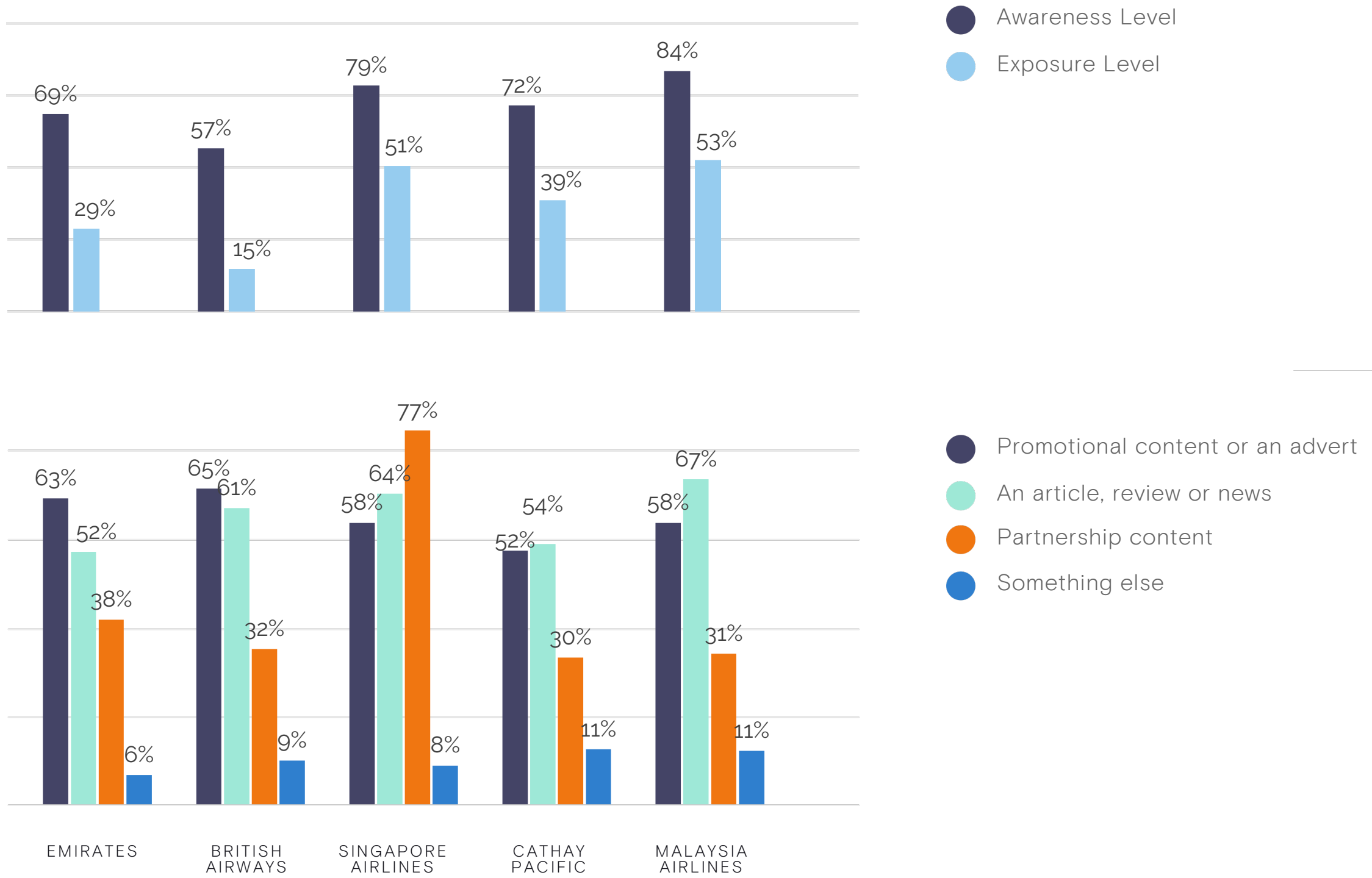
Products & Services significantly more important to Asian audiences



The influence of reputational pillars to audiences in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore is markedly different than in the UK and UAE/Saudi Arabia.

Here, Products & Services is at the top of the pile, while Vision becomes even less important than Sustainability.

Awareness and exposure



Awareness level: represents the percentage of people who have heard and know something or heard and know a lot about the airline.

Exposure level: represents the percentage of people who have heard or seen something about this airline.

Awareness and exposure levels are higher for local carriers, with Malaysia Airlines taking the lead in Asia.

Across local airlines, Cathay Pacific exhibited the largest gap between exposure and awareness levels, indicating high familiarity and low exposure frequency.

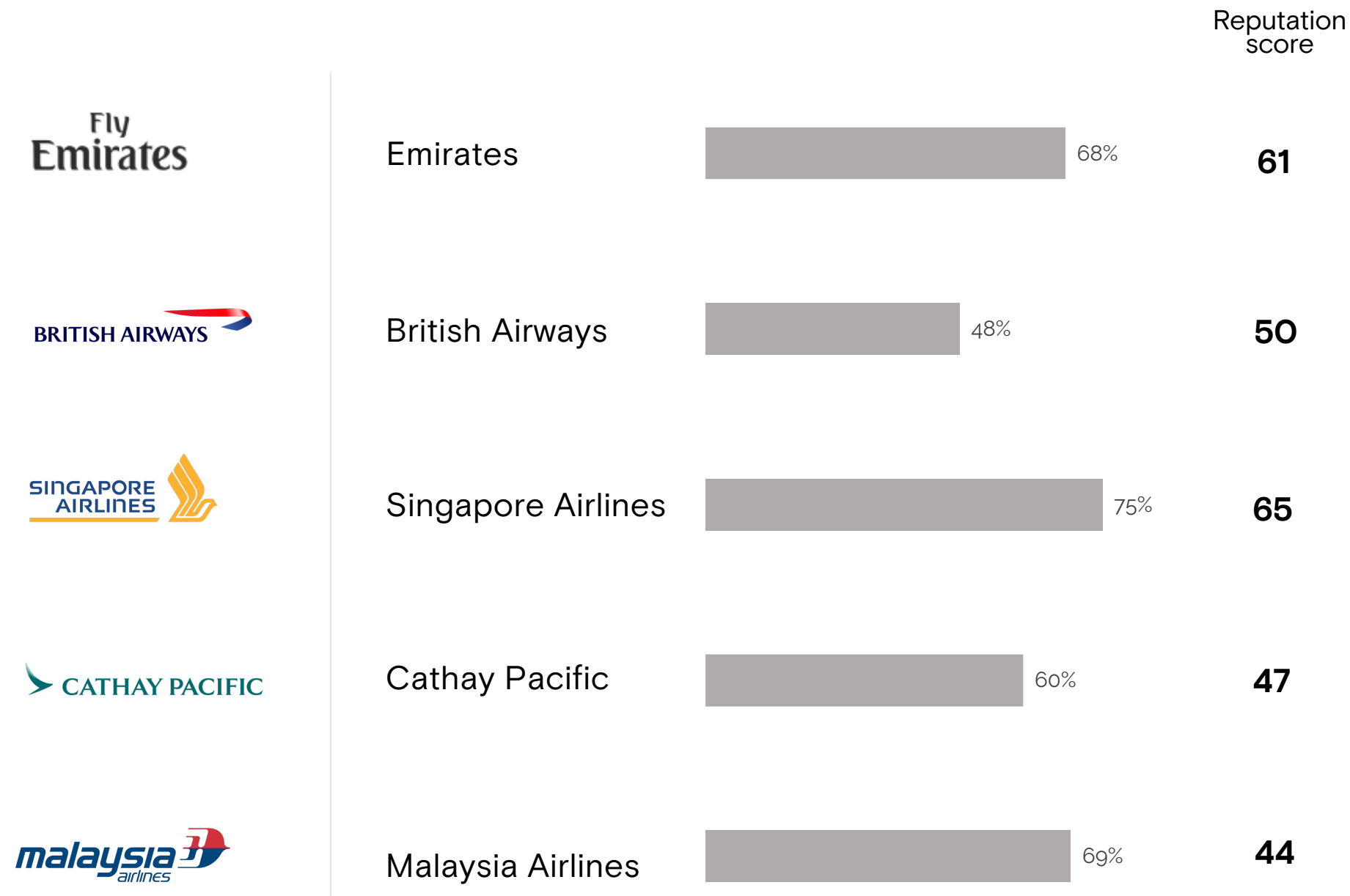
Interestingly, exposure and awareness rates do not reflect media volumes, with Cathay Pacific receiving significantly more traditional and social media coverage than Malaysia Airlines, for instance. This suggests considerable recall for Malaysia Airlines.

Respondents showed lower levels of awareness towards British Airways with significantly limited exposure to any related media content.

Partnership content has been strongly consumed for Singapore Airlines while reviews and news articles were more consumed for Malaysia Airlines. Other airlines showed consistent consumption of both promotional content and reviews.

Usage Likelihood

Usage likelihood trends vary from reputation score (aside from Singapore Airlines), suggesting that purchase decision may be based on a wider range of factors (such as availability) than in other markets.



- Respondents across Asia showed bias towards using the products and/or services of national carriers; Singapore Airlines led with the highest reported usage likelihood, British Airways fell behind, scoring considerably lower on the same scale.
- Despite Malaysia Airlines’ low reputation score, 69% of respondents would still use the airline. This suggests that choice and usage may be impacted by factors beyond reputation and trust in some instances.



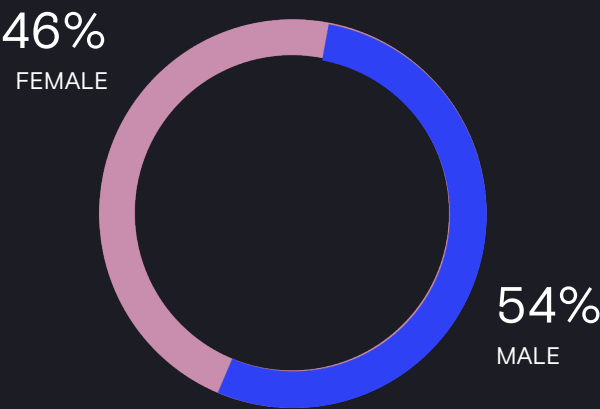
Audience Research: Respondent Profiles

TOTAL SAMPLE SIZE

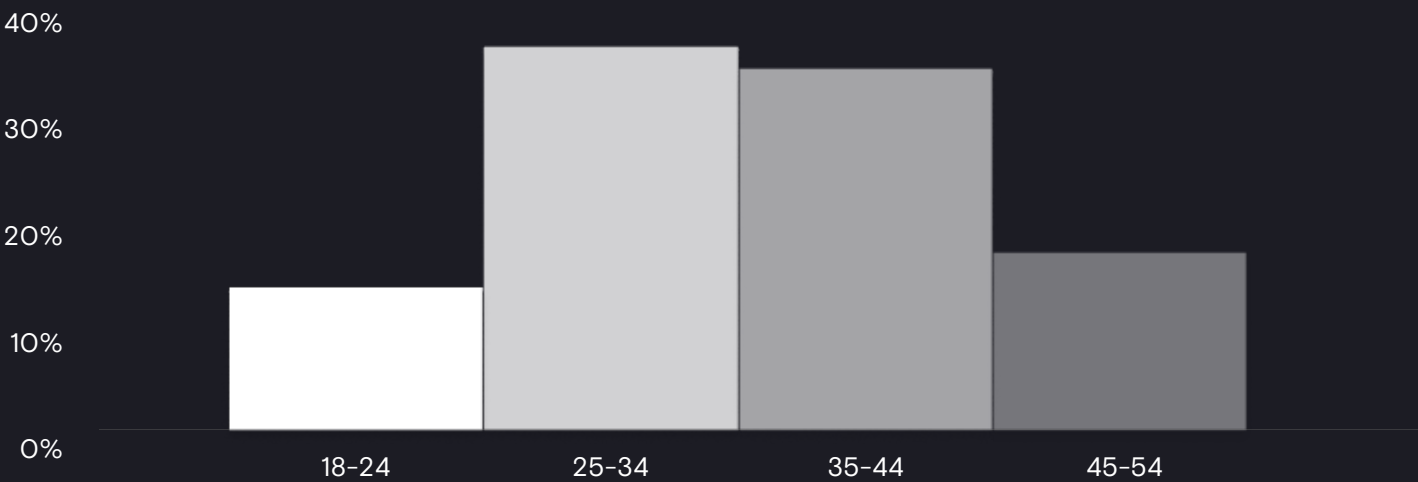


1,534

GENDER DISTRIBUTION



AGE BREAKDOWN



SAMPLE SIZE PER COUNTRY



Let's keep the
conversation going

Contacts us at sales@carma.com